

Towards Unity



The Theological Dialogue
between the Orthodox Church
and the
Oriental Orthodox Churches

Edited by Christine Chaillot and Alexander Belopopsky

✠ INTER-ORTHODOX DIALOGUE

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GENEVA 1998

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*This book is dedicated to the youth
of the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches
in the hope of a continued and fruitful dialogue*

Contents

Foreword	9
Introduction	10
<i>Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland</i>	
<i>Co-President of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue</i>	
Orthodox Unity for The Life of the World	11
<i>Fr Heikki Huttunen</i>	

Part I: The Oriental Orthodox Churches

Christine Chaillot

Introduction to the Oriental Orthodox Churches	18
<i>Christine Chaillot</i>	
The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria	19
The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East	21
The Armenian Apostolic Church	23
The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church	25
The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India	27

Part II: Steps Towards Unity

The Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches	30
<i>Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland</i>	
Relations with the Eastern Orthodox Churches	35
<i>Statement by the Oriental Orthodox Churches, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1965</i>	
On the Unity of the Faith between the Chalcedonians and the Non-Chalcedonian Churches	36
<i>Joint Declaration of the Patriarchs of the Middle East, St Bishoy Monastery, Eygpt, November 1987</i>	
Consultation on Cooperation between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Youth Movements	37
<i>SYNDESMOS Final Document, St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 20-26 May 1991</i>	
Statement of the Coptic Orthodox Church on the Theological Dialogue	39
<i>Letter of Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette to Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, Egypt, November 1990</i>	
On the Relations between the Eastern and Syrian Orthodox Churches	40
<i>Statement of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, Damascus, 12 November 1991</i>	
Statement of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the Official Theological Dialogue	42
<i>Decisions of the Holy Synod, Bucharest, Romania, 8-9 December 1994</i>	

Statement of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Official Theological Dialogue <i>Decisions of the Holy Synod, Moscow, Russia, December 1994</i>	43
--	----

Statement of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Official Theological Dialogue <i>Decisions of the Bishops' Council on the Report of the Synodal Theological Commission, Moscow, Russia, February 1997</i>	44
--	----

Part III: The Unofficial Dialogue

The Four Unofficial Conversations: An Experience of Joy and Hope <i>Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios and Nikos Nissiotis</i>	46
--	----

First Unofficial Consultation, Agreed Statement, Aarhus, Denmark, 11-15 August 1964	48
Second Unofficial Consultation, Agreed Statement <i>Bristol, England, 25-29 July 1967</i>	49

Third Unofficial Consultation, Summary of Conclusions <i>Geneva, Switzerland, 16-21 August 1970</i>	51
--	----

Fourth Unofficial Consultation, Summary of Conclusions <i>Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22-23 January 1971</i>	54
--	----

Part IV: The Official Dialogue

Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches <i>Communiqué of the Joint Commission Chambésy, Switzerland, 10-15 December 1985</i>	58
---	----

Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches <i>(a) Communiqué of the Joint Commission</i>	59
<i>(b) Agreed Statement of the Joint Commission St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 20-24 June 1989</i>	60

Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches <i>(a) Introduction of the Joint Commission</i>	62
<i>(b) Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches of the Joint Commission</i>	63
<i>(c) Recommendations on Pastoral Issues of the Joint Commission Chambésy, Switzerland, 23-28 September 1990</i>	65

Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches <i>Communiqué of the Joint Commission Chambésy, Switzerland, 1-6 November 1993</i>	67
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Part V: Oriental Orthodox Christology

Extracts of Liturgical and Other Texts

Prayers and Anaphoras of the Coptic Orthodox Church	70
Anaphoras of the Syrian Orthodox Church	71
The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church (<i>Extracts</i>)	72
Anaphoras from the Divine Liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church	73
The Epistle of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch (433)	74
Severus of Antioch on Christology (<i>Extracts</i>)	77
Severus of Antioch on 'One Incarnate Nature of God the Word'	78
<i>Rev. Prof. V.C. Samuel</i>	
Armenian Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali's Profession of Faith (1165) (<i>Extracts</i>)	79
The Confession of the Ethiopian Emperor Claudius (1555) (<i>Extracts</i>)	81
On the Issue of Monophysitism and Dyophysitism	82
<i>Statement of the Ethiopian Church (1970) (Extracts)</i>	

Part VI: Further Information

Useful Addresses	86
General Bibliography	88
Maps	91

Part VII: Appendices

The Veneration of Icons in the Oriental Orthodox Churches	96
<i>Christine Chaillot</i>	
Coptic Orthodox Mission in Africa	98
<i>Christine Chaillot</i>	
Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the West Indies, USA and Africa	99
<i>Christine Chaillot</i>	

Foreword

One of the great hopes and challenges for the contemporary Orthodox – and broader Christian – world is the issue of cooperation and communion between the two Christian families called the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

At repeated occasions the members of the Official Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, composed of delegates of local Churches, recommended to publish and distribute information on the content of the Official Theological Dialogue and on the history of these Churches.

This book provides a selection of statements and materials for informed discussion about this Theological Dialogue. It is aimed at all those interested in this Dialogue, and primarily at members of the Orthodox Church who desire to learn more about their Oriental Orthodox sisters and brothers, in order to explain the steps towards the possible restoration of full communion between the two families of Churches.

Therefore, along with the agreements of the Non-Official and Official Dialogues, I have included an introduction to the historical, spiritual, iconographic and even contemporary missionary life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, with a short bibliography. I have also provided some examples of liturgical and other texts of the Oriental Orthodox Churches on Christology.

This choice of texts is, of course, not exhaustive and it should be complemented, for instance, by the texts of the Subcommittees on Liturgical and Pastoral Issues. The reader can follow the steps of the Dialogue by reading *Episkepsis* published by the Orthodox Centre in Chambésy, Geneva.

The intention of this book is to support the affirmation “that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic Tradition” (Second Agreed Statement, Chambésy 1990), as confirmed by the historic encounter of all the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches in the dialogue in recent decades. Whatever information is published and distributed, the most fruitful way of promoting better knowledge and mutual understanding remains the meeting of the

Oriental Orthodox people, their Church prelates and clergy. With this aim I give here a selection of useful addresses of the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox and Orthodox Churches for their continued blessing and support during this project, and special mention must be made of the following:

Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland,
Co-President of the Theological Dialogue
Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette,
Co-President of the Theological Dialogue
Bishop Serapion, Coptic Orthodox Church, USA
Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim of
Aleppo, Syrian Orthodox Church, Syria
Archbishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, Armenian
Apostolic Church, Austria
Bishop Viken Aykazian, Armenian Apostolic
Church, Switzerland
Archbishop Timotheos, Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo Church, Ethiopia
Prof. Vlassios Phidas, Co-Secretary of the
Theological Dialogue, Greece
Rev. Prof. Thomas FitzGerald, Executive Director
World Council of Churches Unit 1
Rev. Prof. G. Dragas, USA
Rev. George Kondothra, Indian Orthodox Church,
India
Rev. Heikki Huttunen, Syndesmos President
(1992-1995), Finland
Dr. S. Brock, Oxford University, Great Britain
Sister Kirsten (Pedersen), Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo Church, Israel

Syndesmos, The World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, has facilitated the emergence of this project. Special thanks are due to Alexander Belopopsky, responsible for the editing process, for his regular advice: without his great help this book could not have been published.

To all these people, and to the many others who have devoted themselves to, and pray for, Orthodox Christian unity, I wish “Many Years!”

Christine Chaillot, Chief Editor

Introduction

Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland
Co-President of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue

The Official Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches is one of the many bilateral Theological Dialogues of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world. At the same time, this is one of the most important dialogues of its kind because it confirms the sincere attempt of the two sides for restoration of the unity of the Church, which is the aim of all the theological dialogues. Specifically, it signifies the coming to unity of most of the Christians of the East

The Orthodox Church is particularly sensitive to the issue of unity, not only because this is the main content of the high-priestly prayer of her Founder, but also because it constitutes an essential aspect of her mission in the world. The Orthodox Church constantly prays for the unity of all in the One Body of Christ that is being realized in the history of salvation. She is always ready to follow the difficult road of theological dialogue from her unshakeable faith in the unity of the Body of the Church, and is conscious of her obligation to bear witness to the Apostolic Faith to the entire human race, and this is not restricted to any particular epoch. She knows full well that the measure of that witness is the catholic, universal, range of the saving work of Christ.

The theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Churches shows us that we share the same Apostolic Faith and that perfect ecclesiastical communion between our two families of Churches should be restored as soon as possible and the anathemas on both sides lifted.

As co-president of the Joint Commission of the Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, I am delighted at the commitment of those seeking to make this dialogue accessible to all Orthodox, other Christians, and to all those interested in the dialogue. I sincerely hope that the texts presented here will help them gain new or better mutual knowledge and understanding. Indeed, I wish that each reader, in his or her own way, will be able to contribute to the realisation of the Unity of our

Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches so that we may live and witness together the same Faith.

+ Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland

Orthodox Unity For The Life of the World

Fr Heikki Huttunen

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians 2: 5-11)

Our Faith in the Incarnation

Faith is our encounter with God, who is with us. God was incarnate, He took flesh: the Son of God became the Son of Man. The Creator is present with His creation in His uncreated energies, the divine encounters the human. In Christ, who is true God and a true human being, God suffered, died on the cross, was resurrected on the third day, and ascended into Heaven in His divine-human body. And He is continuously with us in His Holy Spirit. In the Divine Liturgy we celebrate this faith as Christ told us before He went to His sufferings. We partake of Christ's Body unto salvation and remission of sins. We state our faith, "God is with us, Christ is risen!" This is the Orthodox faith, the faith into which we were baptized and which we are called to realize and pass on in our life, by the gift of the Holy Spirit given to us in chrismation.

In Jesus Christ and because of Jesus Christ, the divine and the human, body and soul belong together. All life springs from God and cries out to return to Him; all life is called to be sanctified; every human being is called to become a saint. In the Person of Jesus Christ this is real and it is promised to us, given to us as an invitation. We encounter Him in faith and grow closer to Him in

the Church, His divine-human Body.

The divine-human reality in Jesus Christ is one of the wonderful mysteries of the Christian Orthodox faith. Without this mystery there is no Christian faith. In Jesus Christ, God is truly and concretely with us, and we are invited to receive Him - not only in our mind or our heart, but in the whole of our life, our thoughts, words and deeds. This is a leap of faith, a paradox incomprehensible to the rational human mind. This is the faith we celebrate when we open our mouth to receive the Holy Communion, when our forehead is anointed with blessed oil, when we pray and light candles in front of icons and kiss them, when we venerate holy relics.

Faith expressed by Councils

Our Orthodox faith was expressed and defined step by step in the early centuries of the Church. Synods or councils met to solve controversies and to respond to challenges to Christian unity caused by sects and heresies. The bishops and theologians met and reached conclusions which were to be received, recognised and assumed in the life of the Church, by the whole people of God. In fact, this is how some of the councils came to be recognised as Ecumenical, because their teaching was universally significant for the whole Church. Sometimes this recognition took a long time: after a few generations a certain council could be crystallised as a unique expression of faith, universally significant in the history of the Church, an Ecumenical Council.

In the first two councils recognised as being Ecumenical, the question was about the mystery of Christ. In the first Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325, it was concluded that Jesus Christ is of one essence with God the Father, and in the Second Council at Constantinople in 381 the full humanity of Christ was affirmed. The faith which was thus expressed says that in Jesus Christ, God really came to us, He really assumed our humanity and saved us. In Christ, God and the human being are not against each other, but

united so that the divine may totally illumine the human. This faith of the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea and Constantinople is expressed in our Creed which we chant in every Liturgy.

Faith in Divine-Human Unity

In the fourth and fifth centuries, heresies and controversies continued regarding the divine-human reality of Christ. Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople was seen to represent one extreme in saying that the divine and the human somehow remain separate in Christ. Archimandrite Eutyches, from the same city, represented the view that, in Christ, His humanity vanished in the divinity, "as a drop of perfume in the ocean".

Nestorius's teaching was rejected by the Council of Ephesus in 431, recognized as the Third Ecumenical Council. The Council confirmed the already existing expression *Theotokos*, the One Who gave birth to God, thus reaffirming the unity of the divine and the human in the Person of Jesus. Since then, this confessing of the *Theotokos* has been considered an adequate expression of Orthodoxy, because it involves an understanding that Christ is consubstantial, i.e. of one essence with God the Father in His divinity, and consubstantial with us in His humanity.

The key personality in the Council of Ephesus was St Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria, whose Twelve Chapters on the divine-human Oneness of Christ were accepted as teaching of the Church at Ephesus. Cyril's expression "one nature of the Incarnate Word of God" became an important symbol for Orthodox Christology. In 433 St Cyril and one of his leading opponents in the christological controversy around the council of Ephesus, Archbishop John of Antioch, came to an agreement in their theological views concerning the divinity and humanity in the one Person of Christ; their correspondence is still of crucial importance for those who wish to understand the christological developments of the 5th century.

In 451, a council met in Chalcedon, a suburb of Constantinople on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, in order to solve the controversy caused by the teachings of Eutyches. The council also reaffirmed the condemnation of Nestorius's teachings by the council of Ephesus in 431. The purpose was to avoid both the heretical extremes of Nestorius and Eutyches and to express the Orthodox faith in the oneness of the human and the divine in Jesus Christ, and in the simultaneous reality of both. A new expression was found, to avoid both extremes, affirming that in the One Person of Christ, "in the hypostatic union", the divine and the human are united, "without commingling or confusion, without change, without separation and without division."

For those who accept this "definition of Chalcedon", Chalcedon is the Fourth Ecumenical Council.

But the attempt to bring together the delegates of the council, who represented different schools of thought in this important question, proved difficult. All the delegates could not agree with the definition of Chalcedon. Theological research has shown that the problem was mainly terminological: both schools of thought used the same terms differently in expressing the divine-human oneness of Christ. For those who accepted Chalcedon it was the *hypostasis* of Christ where his divine and human *physeis*, natures, were united. The non-Chalcedonians continued to use the expression *mia physis*, one nature, to describe the oneness of the Incarnate Word of God as a Person, as St Cyril of Alexandria had done a few decades earlier. In the concept "one nature" St Cyril included both Christ's divinity and humanity and did not exclude either. For non-Chalcedonians, the definition of Chalcedon was unacceptable because it used the term *physis* in a different way.

The Chalcedonians would claim, however, that their use of the word *physis* could be found in the thought of St Cyril, and that the definition of Chalcedon should be understood precisely as a step in the Christological discourse beginning with the Council of Ephesus. This view was later affirmed by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of the Chalcedonians in Constantinople in 553. In any case, the misunderstanding about the term *physis* - meaning "Person" for the non-Chalcedonians and "Nature" for the Chalcedonians - remained, and continued to cause disagreement. One could say that for those who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon, its reception by the people of God was left open.

No compromise was found, and indeed how could there be compromise on such a crucial issue of faith! One side accused the other of monophysitism, i.e., of confessing only one, divine nature in Christ as Eutyches did, and the other accused the other side of dyophysitism, i.e., of separating the divine and the human in Christ and in the end neglecting His divine nature as Nestorius did. But in fact, neither side ever did identify with either of these heresies. Neither of them is the faith of the Chalcedonians nor of the non-Chalcedonians.

It should not be forgotten, however, that together with theological misunderstanding and disagreement, political and cultural differences caused the separation of Chalcedon to remain. The division came along with the political and cultural differences between the imperial capitals of Rome and Constantinople, on the one hand,

and the powerful Oriental Hellenic-Egyptian centre of Alexandria, on the other. Alexandria has also been seen as a contrast to the Syrian theological school of Antioch, which influenced thinking in Old and New Rome. It seems clear that the native Christian populations of Egypt and Syria saw the controversy as an attempt by the imperial centres to impose their power on the Orient. Lamentable personal enmities and quarrels also contributed to the impasse following Chalcedon.

Communion between the local churches with differing reactions to Chalcedon did not break immediately. It took time for the final rupture to take place. Several political and ecclesial attempts at dialogue and reconciliation were made in the two centuries after Chalcedon, but common theological language could not be found, real dialogue proved impossible, and unity was not re-established.

Controversy and Separation

Soon after the Chalcedonian - non-Chalcedonian division, Christianity was faced with the challenge of Islam. Lands with a predominance of non-Chalcedonian Christians - Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia - were conquered by the Arabs. Christianity, much weakened by the schism and its political consequences, could not withstand the attack of the Muslims. A new era started in the life of these local Churches, which continues until today: life under Islamic rule. Theological study and dialogue were restricted and, at times, became impossible.

However, a consciousness that, in fact, the content of the faith on both sides was very close, survived. This was particularly true in the realm of worship, spirituality and monasticism. A common ethos was alive on both sides and influences were exchanged. Surprisingly, many liturgical texts created since Chalcedon are common to both sides, e.g. the hymn "Only Begotten Son of God" and the Paschal canon of St John of Damascus. It is also significant that the four attributes of the Definition of Chalcedon are found in liturgical texts of non-Chalcedonian Churches! This undefined consciousness of spiritual affinity could not, of course, remedy the weakness of the actual theological and ecclesial dialogue. The separation remained. During the centuries, it was petrified by political, ethnic, class and psychological enmity, and it came to be taken for granted. On each side Christians called themselves Orthodox, believing the other to be heretical and gradually they came to know less and less about each other.

Isolation for Centuries

Both families of Churches lived on as God led them in history. The Churches that accepted the

Council of Chalcedon resolved crucial issues of faith in three subsequent ecumenical synods, faced the schism with the West, and were gradually unified within the East Roman empire, not only in terms of the faith, but also in liturgy and external form. Very significant events occurred in this family of Churches long after the separation at Chalcedon, such as the conversion of the Slavs and the modern dispersion (diaspora) of Orthodox throughout the world. These Churches call themselves Orthodox, often with the attribute "Eastern" or that of their particular nationality (e.g. Finnish, Greek, Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian Orthodox).

The Churches that did not accept the council of Chalcedon continued to witness to Christ among their peoples, facing aggressive conquerors from the East and colonialists from the West. For many centuries these Churches were isolated from each other and from the rest of Christendom. Their spirituality, worship and theology remained intact from outside influences or radical changes in the societies that surrounded them. These Churches came to be referred to by others as Ancient, Oriental or non-Chalcedonian, although they always preferred to call themselves Orthodox, with an attribute referring to their ethnic and cultural identity. The Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian and Syrian Churches, and the Church of India which belongs to the Syrian tradition, are together known as the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

A New Encounter

In modern times, and especially in the 20th century, new contacts between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox became possible. Political crises and migrations brought members of both traditions to live in the same area, e.g. in Europe and the Americas. A particular forum for theological and spiritual encounter was created by the ecumenical movement. The bishops and theologians who met each other were surprised by the sense of common faith that had survived and they became interested in studying the theological reasons for the separation 15 centuries earlier.

In 1959, the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras received the young theologian Paul Verghese from the Oriental Orthodox Church of India, of the non-Chalcedonian tradition. For the Patriarch, the issue of restoring sacramental unity was a burning one, and enthusiastically he said to Paul Verghese, (Metropolitan of Delhi, d.1996) "By the close of this year we must achieve unity, we should not wait." This was over 30 years ago, and yet there is still no full sacramental unity between the two families of Churches, although the one has always recognised the Orthodox ethos of the other.

The initiative for an official dialogue came from

the First Pan-Orthodox Conference in 1961. Correspondence between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Oriental Churches followed, and gradual preparations for a dialogue proceeded.

Parallel with the official process, a series of unofficial meetings between Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox theologians, as the two groups decided to call each other, were arranged with the help of the World Council of Churches. There were four such meetings between 1964 and 1971, and they have been of paramount importance in the official dialogue and in the rapprochement of the two families of Churches. All the issues that obscured mutual understanding and stood in the way of the restoration of ecclesial unity were discussed by participants who represented the élite of theologians from both sides. Political circumstances in many countries delayed the start of the official dialogue, as the Churches were not always free to act; it also took time to overcome the historical, sociological and psychological suspicions that had developed among the different communities throughout the 1500 years of separation.

The Official Dialogue

After more than 20 years of preparation, mutual visits and unofficial dialogue among theologians, the official dialogue finally convened for its first plenary session in Chambésy, near Geneva, in December 1985. The first meeting established the agenda as follows: 1) problems of terminology; 2) conciliar formulations; 3) historical factors; 4) interpretation of Christological dogmas today.

The second plenary session, which was held at St Bishoy Monastery in the valley of Nitria in Egypt in June 1989, will remain in history as the meeting where the officially-delegated representatives of the two families of Orthodox Churches were able to agree on a common statement of faith in Jesus Christ for the first time since Chalcedon. The statement is a confession of common faith. In a clear and beautiful way, it states the Orthodox faith in Jesus Christ who is God and Man, one Person, starting with the words of St Cyril of Alexandria, of "the one nature of the Incarnate Word of God", continuing with reference to the later, different uses of the word *physis* –

Nature or Person as mentioned above – and finally quoting the four attributes of the Chalcedonian definition, "without commingling, without change, without separation, without division" of the divine and the human in Jesus Christ. These attributes are common to the liturgical traditions of both families of Churches.

The third plenary session in Chambésy in September 1990 continued the work of the previous meetings and produced a second

statement which essentially reiterates the first one, and goes on to conclude that the basis for lifting all mutual condemnations and anathemas of the past is now clear, and that this effectively means restoration of full ecclesial and sacramental unity. The Chambésy statement joyfully and humbly says: "...we have now clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic Tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion."

In November 1993, the official dialogue continued at Chambésy to discuss the concrete canonical and ecclesial consequences of the Christological agreement. It was decided to propose to the local Churches that all anathemas and condemnations of teachers and councils of the other Orthodox family of Churches (Eastern and Oriental respectively) be lifted on the basis that the authentic Orthodox faith has been maintained by both sides. The lifting of the anathemas will imply restoration of full sacramental and ecclesial unity.

With the agreement on Christology, the actual theological dialogue between the two families of Churches was concluded. No theological differences remain. From a "Chalcedonian" point of view, one could say that the reception process of the council of Chalcedon has reached its conclusion only now, 1500 years later. This effectively remove the obstacles to unity, because there is no controversy about the teaching of subsequent Ecumenical Councils of the Chalcedonian tradition.

The common definition and enumeration of Ecumenical Councils remains, however, a challenge. In the Eastern Orthodox family we speak of seven Ecumenical Councils, and in the Oriental Orthodox family of three. In light of the fact that there is no disagreement as to the teaching of the four later councils and that a new Great and Holy Council is being prepared, it is to be expected that a solution will be found.

"It is a sin not to be separated from heretics. In the same way it is a sin to be separated from the Orthodox!" said one of the committee members in the dialogue. The official dialogue of the Churches urged local Churches and their monasteries, theological schools, spiritual brotherhoods and youth movements to prepare for the imminent ecclesial unity through common activities and cooperation.

Full Fellowship in SYNDESMOS

SYNDESMOS, The World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, has, since its foundation in 1953, considered one of its principle tasks to be that of furthering cooperation between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth. Oriental guests, observers and participants have taken part in SYNDESMOS meetings throughout the years, and, since 1980, it has been possible for Oriental movements to join SYNDESMOS as associate members. Gradually, SYNDESMOS has established contacts with youth movements in all the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

In May 1991, a consultation of Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements was arranged by SYNDESMOS and hosted by the Coptic Orthodox Church at St Bishoy Monastery. The aim was to enable youth movements to support the expected re-establishment of communion between the two families of Churches, as recommended also by the Churches' official dialogue. The consultation recommended that Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements exchange information about each other and organize common activities; that SYNDESMOS distribute information on the Churches and their youth in both families and encourage cooperation at local and regional level among youth movements and theological schools and, most importantly, that SYNDESMOS amend its constitution to allow Oriental Orthodox youth movements and theological schools to become full affiliated members of the Fellowship.

The Executive Committee of SYNDESMOS carefully prepared the proposal to amend its constitution. The idea of affiliate membership for the Oriental Orthodox movements and schools was not accepted unanimously, because some SYNDESMOS members were of the opinion that it should only be possible after ecclesial and sacramental unity had been officially concluded. Others thought that, as a youth organization, SYNDESMOS would best serve the Church by implementing the results of the official dialogue on its own level, bringing young people closer together in preparation for the final re-establishment of unity. The disagreement was not about the importance of rapprochement but about the best way of implementing it. In order to solve the problem, an advisory committee of SYNDESMOS, consisting of former Executive Committee members and officers, meeting prior to the XIV General Assembly in Moscow, proposed that a new category of membership be created to allow equal status for Oriental Orthodox members, while reflecting the remaining canonical separation. This proposal was taken by the Executive Committee to the General Assembly,

which unanimously decided to create the category of federated membership for Oriental Orthodox youth movements and theological schools in SYNDESMOS. They also have the right to elect two non-voting representatives to the Executive Committee. This means that Oriental Orthodox members have an equal position with affiliated Eastern Orthodox members in SYNDESMOS, but remain separate until full ecclesial and sacramental unity is re-established. It also makes SYNDESMOS an active agent in the continuing rapprochement and cooperation of the two families of Churches, on the youth level, and keeps this exciting and compelling task present in everything SYNDESMOS does. Recently, SYNDESMOS organized a fruitful consultation between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth, in May 1997 in Duma, Lebanon.

Why Unity?

The rediscovery of the unity in faith among the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox is a unique event in Christian history. For the first time two world-wide communions of Churches have found the basis for their full sacramental, ecclesial and canonical unity. It is a spiritual experience stretching beyond inherited prejudices and reminding us of the mystery of the Church, which transcends human definitions and limits.

This dialogue and its outcome challenge us to recognize the presence and action of the Holy Spirit beyond our own familiar cultural and political realm, which we easily identify with the Church. It is demanding to admit this and to look with new eyes at our one-sided or ethnocentric convictions about Church history. The progress will still encounter many obstacles, because of the psychological, social and political differences that have grown during 1500 years of separation.

A revealing example is the difficulty of knowing what to call each other: the word Orthodox is common and cherished on both sides, and it has been a focal point of the dialogue to discover each other's real entitlement to be called Orthodox. To deny this deep meaning of the rediscovered unity in faith between both traditions of Orthodox Christianity would mean to deny the real presence and surprising action of the Holy Spirit.

Both families of Orthodox Churches are challenged and enriched by this encounter on many levels: their understanding of history and varying expressions of spiritual and liturgical life are widened. For example, for the Eastern Orthodox, it brings back the early Christian richness of a variety of liturgical traditions as well as a strengthened sense of the origins of monasticism. For the Orientals, it opens the treasures of Byzantine thought and art as they

developed in the spiritual centres around Constantinople and later among the Slavic and other East European nations.

The local Churches of both families are reminded of the Catholicity of the Church in the renewed experience of unity, and our world view is broadened in a concrete way. The experience of brothers and sisters in another local Church in a completely different context will enable us to see the mission of the Orthodox in the world as a whole. For example, with the combined efforts of both families of Orthodox, our presence in America, Africa and Asia will carry a radically more relevant and resounding strength than if we are separated. This view stems of course from the conviction that the Orthodox Christians have a contribution to make towards mutual understanding in these critical times of ecological crisis, ethnic hatred and wars and the breakdown of ideology.

In the Ecumenical Movement, the Orthodox of both families of Churches are often alone in emphasizing the importance of the dialogue of faith. Others often claim that common action and a sense of belonging together is enough and that Christian unity is already achieved on some vaguely described spiritual level. The Orthodox would wish to look for unity in faith, which leads to unity in sacraments and in the fullness of ecclesial life. This is what is now taking place between the two traditions of Orthodoxy: the historical disagreement has been cleared and the fullness of faith and spiritual life is being rediscovered in the other tradition. It proves that a conscious theological dialogue can lead to ecclesial unity.

Our mission as baptized and chrismated members of the Church and bearers of the Orthodox faith is to discover the true identity of the Church and of the Orthodox faith and to distinguish that from other facts and symbols of our history. The Church must be free to be Herself, here and now. This task is continuous, God calls us to grow continuously as individuals and as communities, to empty ourselves and to give ourselves to each other in love. As we encounter each other and see how other people in far away places, under different social circumstances and in other cultures, live out the same Orthodox faith, we are helped in our own Orthodox faith and life. This is the way for us to come to realize that God really is with us, in the midst of our everyday lives. This perspective will open new responses to questions that sometimes seem to stagnate and stifle the real Orthodox identity of the Church, such as the calendar, ecclesial jurisdiction, liturgical language, property, relation to political power, and other challenges to our conventional

ways.

To recognise the Orthodox faith in brothers and sisters separated for 1500 years, and to discover together the divine-human mystery of Christ is a great gift from God. This gift is also a calling, a challenge for us. We are to act it out, to incarnate it in our lives. It takes humility to admit that we are only beginners on the Orthodox way, and it takes a grain of free will to open ourselves to the ever-surprising new possibilities of growth and spiritual renewal offered to us by God Who is with us.

Fr. Heikki Huttunen was President of SYNDESMOS, The World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, 1992-95, and has been a delegate of the Finnish Orthodox Church to some sessions of the Official Theological Dialogue.

Part I
The Oriental Orthodox Churches
Christine Chaillot

Introduction to the Oriental Orthodox Churches

Christine Chaillot

The Middle East, Armenia, Ethiopia and India, are the lands of the ancient and traditional Churches which are known today as the Oriental Orthodox Churches. They are the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin and Cilicia, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India.

These Churches did not accept the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and were thus separated from the Churches who did. This split among Christians not only changed the whole destiny of these Oriental Churches, but also the whole of Church history. It resulted in the emergence of two distinct jurisdictions and parallel Patriarchates in Antioch and Alexandria. The arrival of Islam in the 7th century brought a new political system, with successive Muslim occupations: Arabs [Umayyads (661-750) and Abbasids (750-1258)], Fatimids (969-1171), Seljuk Turks (1055-1307), Mongols (1257-1336), Mamelukes (1250-1517), and Ottomans (1453-1922). Christians had to pay special personal and land taxes, but Christian Church leaders could retain certain jurisdictional and administrative powers. The Oriental Orthodox Churches were always conscious of their specific local identities.

The Oriental Orthodox Churches trace their origins to the beginnings of Christianity. The Coptic Church was made up of Christian communities which spread along the Nile and was quickly in contact with the Ethiopian people. During a complex history of invasions and continuously changing borders, the Syrian and Armenian communities spread over the territories of Syria, Iraq, Eastern Turkey and Armenia. At one time, an Armenian kingdom even included Cilicia in what is today South-East Turkey.

With the arrival of the Crusaders from the 11th century onwards, and later with Catholic and Protestant missionaries, some Oriental Orthodox people changed their Church denomination. This is why today the Oriental Orthodox insist on being

called "Orthodox", to distinguish themselves from those Churches with their authorities in the West.

In the early 20th century genocide, Armenians and Syrian Christians were massacred and fled from Turkey. In the 1960s, Coptic Christian emigration increased, as did that of the Ethiopians in the 1970s following the Marxist revolution there. Large diasporas of Oriental Orthodox exist today in North and South America, Europe, Australia and Africa, and their churches are increasingly using local languages in worship.

In January 1965 the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie organised a conference of the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where they proclaimed their unity of faith and discussed the following topics: the challenges of the modern world; co-operation in theological education and evangelism; peace and justice; and their relationship with other Christian Churches. The meeting also encouraged the theological dialogue with the Orthodox Church as a first step to Christian unity.

All the Oriental Orthodox Churches retain ancient Orthodox practices in their liturgical and spiritual life, fasting, and the veneration of Saints, relics and icons.

All of the Oriental Orthodox Churches are members of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and of various regional ecumenical bodies. From 1991, Archbishop Aram Keshishian, Armenian Archbishop of Beirut and Primate of Lebanon, and subsequently Catholicos of Cilicia, was elected Moderator of the WCC Central Committee, and the Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III as one of the WCC Presidents.

An introductory article about each Church is given below, with a summary of its establishment, development, as well as its Patristic, monastic and liturgical traditions, and other aspects of its history and contemporary situation.

All historical facts below before the separation of the two families of churches are common to all Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Christians.

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Amba Rueiss Building
222 Ramses Street
Abbaseya
P.O. Box 9035
Nasr City, Cairo
Egypt
Tel: +(20) (2) 2857889 / 2843018
Fax: +(20) (2) 2825983 / 2836691

Head of Church

His Holiness Shenouda III
Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the Seat of St Mark

Statistics

7 million members approx.
50 dioceses

Main Publications

El Keraaza (The Predication)
bi-weekly in Arabic and monthly in English

Watany
in Arabic

Ri salât al-shabâb al-kanasi
(Church Youth Letter)
Monthly in Arabic

Agape News Letter
Arabic with some English

The Copts trace their descent from the Pharaonic Egyptians; the word "Copt" means "Egyptian". The historian Eusebius (4th c.) records the tradition that the Church in Egypt was founded by Saint Mark the Evangelist. In the first centuries, Alexandria ranked with Antioch, Jerusalem and Rome as one of the main Christian centres. The Church of Egypt suffered greatly from the different Roman persecutions, especially under Diocletian in 284: this date marks the beginning of the Coptic Church Calendar in memory of its numerous martyrs. The Copts came under Persian domination in 616 and Arab invasion in 642; periods of tolerance and persecution followed.

Egypt is the motherland of monasticism. The desert hermits, beginning with St Anthony, attracted many foreign Christians to visit Egypt in the fourth and later centuries. St Pachomius established cenobitic or community monastic rules which were subsequently taken up by St Basil. In Egypt today there remain about 13 working monasteries for the 600 monks and seven monasteries for the 250 nuns. In recent years, ancient monasteries have been restored and monasticism has been revived with the arrival of educated monks and nuns.

The ancient catechetical school of Alexandria was famous because of the great Church Fathers who taught there, such as St Clement. The greatest theologians of Alexandria are St Athanasius and St Cyril. The former saved the whole Church from the Arian heresy, the latter from Nestorianism. Some important books were written in Arabic in the Middle Ages, including for example those by Severius ibn al-Muqaffa' (10th c.), the Al-'Assal brothers (13th c.), Paulos al-Boushi (13th c.), and Abu l-Barakat (14th c.).

From the middle of the 19th century, under Patriarchs Cyril IV (1854-61) and Cyril V (1874-1927), the Coptic Church began to undergo phases of new development: primary, secondary and technical schools for boys and girls were opened; publishing activity was begun; and benevolent societies were founded. The Church, and

particularly monasticism, took on a new lease of life under Patriarch Cyril VI (1959-71) who was an ascetic, a man of deep prayer and a well known miracle-worker.

Today the Coptic Church is the largest in the Middle East, counting around seven million members. Its leader is Pope and Patriarch Shenouda III, who is largely responsible for the revival of the last twenty years, and is a very spiritual preacher who is heard every week in the Coptic cathedral in Cairo by thousands of faithful.

The theological school was opened definitively in 1893, and now educates laity as well as future clergy. There are seven Coptic theological schools in Egypt, two in North America and one in Australia. In the new Patristic Centre in Cairo, young Coptic theologians who studied in Greece are translating the Church Fathers into Arabic, publishing these texts and organising public conferences. In Cairo, the Institute of Coptic Studies, the Coptic Archeological Society and the Coptic Museum, also specialise in Coptic Studies.

Coptic churches have been founded around the world since the 1960s as a result of Coptic emigration. The first church was organised in Toronto (Canada) in 1964. By 1993 there were 50 parishes in the United States, 10 in Canada, 16 in Australia, and 23 in Western Europe.

The Bishopric of Youth, currently headed by Bishop Moussa, organises many activities and conferences in Egypt and in communities in America and Australia. Besides youth groups in parishes, retreats for urban and rural youth are organised during the summer holidays, as well as training courses for youth leaders. There is a Bible Study Centre in the Bishopric of Youth situated in the Patriarchate in Cairo. Special publications for youth are also produced. Young people are deeply involved in the Church life, often as Sunday school teachers.

The Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services runs a variety of health and educational programmes to help disadvantaged people (the unemployed, the illiterate, and drug addicts) in rural and suburban areas, as well as handicapped and old people, orphans and farmers. In recent decades, a celibate female and male diaconate has played an important spiritual and social role in the Church. The Coptic laity participates actively in the life of the parish and of the Church.

The first missionary activity of the Coptic Church in Africa led to the early Christianization of much of Libya, and Nubia (Sudan). There is important missionary work in other parts of Africa, notably in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

The Coptic language is still used in some prayers and hymns but most of the liturgy is sung

in Arabic. The anaphoras used in the Coptic liturgy are those of St Gregory and St Cyril, while St Basil's is the most often used.

The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East

Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East

Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate

P.O. Box 22260

Bab Tooma

Damascus

Syria

Tel: +(963)(11) 5432401 / 5435918

Fax: +(963)(11) 5432400

Head of Church

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas

Statistics

c. 1.5 million members around world

33 Metropolitans and Bishops

Publications

Journal of the Patriarchate

In Arabic

Church publishing houses

Mardin in Aleppo, Syria

Fax: +(963) 21642260

Bar Hebreus in Hengelo, Holland

Fax: +(31) 53615879

Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church in India

Head of Church

Catholicos of the East

Mar Baselios Paulos II (d. 1996)

Catholicosate Aramana

Muvattupuzha

688661 Kerala

India

Tel: +91 4858 32401 / 484 740379

Fax: +91 484 730241

It is in Antioch that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts 11:19-26). In the early Christian period, Antioch was the capital of ancient Syria, an important crossroads in the Middle East at that time. The Holy See of Antioch was founded by the Apostle Peter, who is considered to be the first Head of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.

Around Edessa (today Urfa in Turkey) where the Syriac-speaking community formed a kingdom, Christianity was spread by Addai, one of the 70 disciples mentioned in Luke (10:1), and by Mari. The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch then developed in the region of Tur Abdin in modern Turkey, around Mar Matta Monastery and Tikrit in present-day Iraq. The first monasteries were founded from the 4th century near Antioch and Aleppo, in Tur Abdin and in Mesopotamia. Today, less than 400 Syrian Christian families remain in Tur Abdin.

The Church is also known as "West Syrian" (i.e., West of the Tigris) in order to distinguish it from the "East Syrian" Church of Persia, also called the Assyrian Church of the East (or the so-called "Nestorian") which was the largest Church East of the Tigris. Mar Severius (d.538) was the last Syrian Orthodox Patriarch who presided in Antioch. After him, the Syrian Patriarchate was transferred from Antioch to the region of Aleppo, and then to different places, among them Deir Al Zafaran, near Mardin, in Turkey, and Homs in 1933 and finally to Damascus, the capital of Syria, in 1959. Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem Barsaum (1933-57) and Patriarch Jacob III (1957-80) have been among the two most influential spiritual leaders and historians of this Church in the 20th century.

One of the best-known Church Fathers is St Ignatius of Antioch, famous for the letters he wrote and for his martyrdom in Rome. The most important theologian of the School of Edessa was Saint Ephrem (d.373); some Syrian Orthodox theologians are Jacob of Sarugh (d.521), Philoxenos of Mabbug (d.523), Severius of Antioch

(d.538), Jacob of Edessa (d.708). Jacob Baradaeus (d.578) greatly reorganised and strengthened the life of his Church.

The Syrian Orthodox Church went through a period of "renaissance" in the 12th and 13th centuries. The most prominent figures at that time were Michael the Great (d.1199), Dionysius Bar Salibi (d.1171) and Bar Hebraeus (1264-86). The last also compiled the Church Canons (*Hudoye*) which are still in use today. During that time the Church had around 100 bishoprics in Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Cyprus. As the Syrian Maronites had previously done in the 7th century, some Syrian members united with the Catholic Church of Rome at the end of the 18th century and established a separate "Uniate" Patriarchate of the Syrian Catholics.

The Syrian Orthodox faithful have suffered persecutions throughout the centuries. Over 100,000 Syrian Orthodox are estimated to have been killed in 1915 under the Ottoman authorities, at the time of the Armenian genocide. Consequently, many people fled to Mosul (Iraq), Al Jasirah, Aleppo, Damascus and other cities in Syria, as well as to Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. There were other migrations after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, mainly to the Middle East, North and South America, and in the 1960s to Europe.

Today this Church with its Syriac roots counts its faithful in the Middle East, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Turkey and other parts of the world. Thanks to the energy of Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, there has been a revival in the Church, and a new seminary in Ma'arat Saydnaya (25 km from Damascus) that can house up to 100 students has been opened. There are also theological seminaries in Iraq as well as in India. Some students are sent abroad for higher theological studies. Centres for religious education, especially aimed at young people, are being established in every parish. Choirs, Bible studies, catechism and other activities are organised for the youth.

Today, only a few monks are left at the ancient Mar Matta Monastery near Mosul in Iraq, as well as at St Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem. Most of the young monks can now be found in Syria in the Patriarchate and at the nearby Theological Seminary. In Tur Abdin very few monasteries are still active. The ancient Monastery of Mar Gabriel of Tur Abdin is the residence of Metropolitan T. Samuel Aktas.

Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo is in charge of external relations for the Church, and of the Mardin Church publishing house. There are four Bishops and around 100,000 faithful in Europe. The Saint Ephrem monastery

in Hengelo (Netherlands) is a Syrian Orthodox centre and publishing house. There are three Bishops in North America, with around 35,000 faithful. Many Syrian Orthodox are found in South America and also in Australia.

The liturgical language of the Church is Syriac, which is related to the mother tongue of Christ and his apostles, Aramaic. Around 70 anaphoras have been identified, with around ten in liturgical use, the most commonly used being the Anaphora of St James and that of the Twelve Apostles.

The Armenian Apostolic Church

Armenian Apostolic Church

Catholicosate of All Armenians

378310 Etchmiadzin

Armenia

Tel: +(374) (2) 151624 / 288666

Fax: +(374) (2) 151166 / 151077

Head of Church

Catholicos Karekin I

Patriarch of All Armenians

Publications

Etchmiadzin

Monthly official magazine

Hatchkar

In Russian

Sion

Armenian, Jerusalem)

Bema

(Mother Church)

English and Armenian, USA

The Catholicosate of Cilicia

PO Box 70317

Antelias near Beirut

Lebanon

Tel: +(961) 1 410001 - 3

Fax: +(961) 1 410002

Head of Church

Catholicos Aram I Keshishian

Publication

Hask (Ear of Corn)

Monthly

The Catholicosate of Holy Etchmiadzin, or the place where "the Only-Begotten Son has descended", is the historical and spiritual centre of the Armenian Church and the Mother See, having primacy of honour over the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (now in Lebanon) and over the Armenian Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople.

According to Armenian tradition, the Apostles St Thaddeus and St Bartholomew came to Armenia, a bridge territory between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and preached the Gospel. Around 301-14, King Tiridates III was converted by St Gregory the Illuminator and Christianity was then proclaimed as the state religion. This made Armenia the first Christian nation.

Representatives of the Armenian Church were not present in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, as the Armenians were protecting their Christian territory from the invading Zoroastrian Persians.

Among the greatest of the Armenian Fathers are St Mesrob (d.440?) who invented the Armenian alphabet and translated the Bible; Eznik (5 c.) was the first great Armenian theologian; Catholicos Sahag Tsoroporetzi (d.703); St John of Odzun (8 c.) the Philosopher, who was a great codifier and wrote important theological works; St Gregory of Narek (951-1003), who was a great mystical poet; and Gregory of Datev (14 c.).

Catholicos Gregory II (d.1105) tried to bring about reconciliation with the Byzantine Church. The famous Catholicos and poet, Nerses the Gracious (1101-1173), addressed a Profession of Faith of the Armenian Church to Emperor Manuel I Comnenus in 1165 when the possibility of union between the Byzantine and the Armenian Churches was being discussed. The same Profession was presented by the Catholicos Nerses V in 1848 when he visited the Russian Tsar Nicolas I, who found it in keeping with Orthodoxy. Attempts were made to unite the Russian and Armenian Churches in the 19th century.

Persian rule in Armenia (428-654) was followed

by Arab domination (654-885), then by the Bagratid kingdom (885-1045). King Shapur of Persia ordered the first great migration of Armenians during the second half of the 4th century. In the early 17th c. the Persian Shah Abbas I transferred many Armenians to his territory where they built the town of New Julfa in Isfahan (Iran).

From the 11th century, many Armenians went to Cilicia and later transferred the Catholicosate to the capital Sis (1292), after having formed an independent kingdom, which was destroyed in 1375 by the Mamelukes of Egypt. From their arrival around 1095-97 the Crusaders became allies of the Armenians of Cilicia. After 1238, Armenia was under Mongol domination. In 1441 a Catholicosate came into existence again in Etchmiadzin, consequently there were two Catholicosates in the Armenian Church. From the 16th century onwards, Cilicia was part of the Ottoman Empire. Many Armenians took refuge in Syria and in Lebanon after the early 20th century genocide. The Catholicosate of Cilicia was reorganised in Lebanon in 1930.

There are two Armenian Patriarchates, one in Jerusalem and one in Istanbul. When Sultan Mohamed II seized Constantinople, Armenian merchants were encouraged to settle there. An Armenian Patriarchate was being organized in the city from the end of the 15th century, which was subsequently recognized as the only legal representative of all the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

From ancient times there has been an Armenian diaspora, provoked by successive occupations of the region. Armenian communities were established in the Middle East, in the Balkans and Poland, and later in many parts of the world. More than one million Armenians were massacred in the genocide in Ottoman Turkey culminating in 1915. The Catholicos Megerditch Kherimian (or better known as Hayrik) (d. 1907) was an important defender of the Armenian cause at that time. Today, the 2.5 million Armenians in the diaspora are mostly under the jurisdiction of the Mother Church of Etchmiadzin. However, the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Lebanon also has dioceses in Cyprus, Syria, Iran, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, the USA and in Canada. New churches, schools, social and cultural centres have been established throughout the diaspora, where Armenian communities are very active in their support of Armenia, still suffering the consequences of the 1988 earthquake and of war with Azerbaijan.

In Armenia there are now three seminaries with a total of over 200 students: one in Etchmiadzin which was re-opened in 1945, one on lake Sevan

and one in Gumri (ex Leninakan). In the USA, the St Nerses Armenian Theological Seminary is situated in New Rochelle (New York). In Jerusalem, St James's Seminary is also attended by theological students, some from Armenia. In Lebanon the seminary is now in Bikfaya, above Antelias. In 1963, the Armenian Church University Students Association was founded in Beirut, which has since been responsible for the organization of many lectures, seminars and publications.

A new Christian Education Centre has been opened in Armenia, training Sunday school teachers, providing catechism for the faithful, publishing religious materials, and organising various other Church activities. The newly-elected Catholicos in Etchmiadzin, Karekin I, was previously Catholicos of Cilicia in Lebanon, where he was also chaplain of the Armenian students in Beirut. The current Catholicos of Cilicia is Aram I Keshishian, elected in 1995.

The Armenian cultural legacy is well known for its architecture and illuminated manuscripts. In Armenia, the Church is developing its publishing and media activities again.

The Armenian liturgy was inspired by that of Saint Basil of Caesarea and also shows some similarity with the Syriac tradition.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate
P.O. Box 1283
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Tel: +(251)(1)111989 / 116507
Fax: +(251)(1)551455 / 552211

Head of Church

Patriarch of Ethiopia
Abuna Paulos

Statistics

Over 30 million members
30 dioceses
400000 clergy
25000 parish churches
937 monasteries

Main Publications

Zena Bete Christian
(weekly)
Dimste Tewahedo
(bi-monthly)
Maedot
(quarterly)
Tinsae
all in Amharic

The Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40) relates the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace by Philip on his way back from Jerusalem. The Ethiopian Church in Africa was formally established when Frumentius, the first bishop of Axum, a Syrian by origin, was ordained by St Athanasius in Alexandria around 330. He is known as *Abba Salama*, meaning Father of Peace and *Kassaté Berhan* or Revealer of Light. Christianity became the official religion in the country around 332. The Church was strengthened by the arrival of the Nine Saints (c. 480) from the Eastern Mediterranean area, who translated books, including the Bible and other doctrinal and ascetic works, into the ancient national language Gheez. They also preached the Gospel and founded monastic communities. In the 6th century, the Ethiopian St Yared is said to have composed Ethiopian Church music in three modes and the *degwa* or hymnal is attributed to him.

In 356, a letter was written by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine in which he addresses Ezana, the first Christian King of Ethiopia, as "his precious brother". In the 6th century the Byzantine Emperor Justin communicated with the Ethiopian King Kaleb who organised an expedition to Yemen where Christians had been massacred.

Celebrated figures in Ethiopian Church history include the monks Za-Mikael Aragawi, one of the Nine Saints, who founded the famous monastery of Debre Damo; Gabra Manfas Quddus, the 12th-century hermit; Iyasus-Mo'a (d.1292) who opened a Christian school at lake Hayq and his pupil Takla-Haymanot, who established the most important monastery of Debre Libanos.

Regular contacts with the Byzantine world virtually ceased with the rapid Muslim advances from the 7th century onwards. During the reign of King Lalibela at the end of the 12th century, extraordinary churches were hewn in the rock in Northern Ethiopia. The Solomonian dynasty came into power after the Zagwe kings in 1270. The learned King Zara Yaqob (1434-1468) reformed the

Church and reorganised the kingdom. In the 16th century, the Somali Muslim troops, led by "Gragne" (the left-handed), pillaged the country. The Ethiopian Emperor Lebna Dengel (1508-40) requested help from the Portuguese who came to overthrow the Muslim armies. They were accompanied by Jesuit missionaries who began to preach to the population. In response to them, King Galawdewos or Claudius (1540-59) composed a Confession of Faith.

Ethiopia emerged from isolation under the progressive Emperor Theodoros II. Emperors Yohannes IV (1872-89) and Menelek II (1889-1913) were in contact with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Symphony between the Church and the Monarchy continued until the last Emperor, Haile Selassie, or "Might of the Trinity" (1930-74), who gathered all the Oriental Orthodox Churches together for an historic meeting in Addis Ababa in 1965.

On 28 June 1959 Abuna Basilios was ordained the first Patriarch of Ethiopia by Pope Cyril VI, the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria. Before this, the Church in Ethiopia was directly within the jurisdiction of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In 1929, the first five Ethiopian bishops had been consecrated as a first step towards self-government (autocephaly).

In the 19th century, Abuna Salama I (d. 1867), propagated the "Tewahedo" doctrine, which remains the official teaching of the Church. Tewahedo, which means united, confesses the unity of the human and divine in the Person of Christ, without confusion and without separation.

The present Patriarch is Abuna Paulos. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is numerically the largest of all the Oriental Orthodox Churches, with over 30 million members. Before 1974, regular Church radio programmes were broadcast on two different stations. The Church also has its own printing press. There is an active Sunday school system, and a youth department, created in 1964, which is responsible for printing magazines as well as for performing other services for the Church. The Holy Synod meets twice a year.

The Ethiopian Church's educational system had an oral tradition which was based on commentaries of the Old and New Testaments, selected texts from its Church Fathers, compositions of religious poetry (*qené*), theological questions, and Church music.

The Holy Trinity Theological College was founded in 1945 in Addis Ababa. It was closed down for about 20 years by the Marxist government, but given back to the Church by the new government in 1993. St Paul's Theological Seminary is the main seminary. In Ethiopia there

are also seven training centres for clergy.

Debteras are traditional Church scholars who are also master singers. There are fourteen anaphoras in use in the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is sung in ancient Gheez, and sometimes in the spoken language, Amharic. The Church services and processions evoke Old Testament scenes, with the use of cymbals, sistra, drums, and the beating of prayer-sticks (Psalm 150; 2 Samuel 6:5). These instruments also give a specific African character to the Church. The shape of the churches is circular or octagonal.

The Ethiopians of the diaspora have parishes mainly in the USA and Great Britain, but also in Germany, Sweden, Sudan, South Africa and even in the West Indies, where some of the local people have converted to Orthodoxy. An Ethiopian community has existed in the Holy Land since the Byzantine era.

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India

Catholicossate Palace

Devalokam

Kottayam

686038 Kerala

India

Tel: +(91)(481)578500

Fax: +(91)(481)570569

Head of Church

His Holiness Moran Mar Basilius Mar Thomas

Matthews II, Catholicos of the East and Malankara

Metropolitan

Statistics

1 million members

21 dioceses

Main Publications

Malankara Sabha

(Church of Malankara)

In Malayalam

Orthodox Youth

In Malayalam, some English articles

Star of the East

Quarterly in English, published by Delhi Orthodox Centre

The Light

Quarterly in English and Hindi published in Calcutta Diocese

Deepthi

Annual publication of the Seminary

In India, the history of the Malankara Oriental Orthodox Church of the Syriac tradition is complex. This ancient Church traces its foundation to the Apostle Thomas whose place of martyrdom is still venerated near Madras. Communities were established in South India since the early Christian period. Cosmas, who travelled to India in the 6th c., writes in his *Christian Topography* that the ancient Church of India was connected with the Church in Persia, which used the Syriac rite and liturgical language. Around 823, two Bishops are recorded as going from Persia to India with some migrating families.

In the 16th century, with the arrival of Portuguese colonisers and Jesuit missionaries, the community was forced to accept the papal authority of Rome. But one part rejected it with the Coonan Cross Oath (1653) and appealed to other Oriental Churches. Consequently, Bishop Mar Gregorios of the West Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch came to Malabar in 1665 and consecrated a bishop, establishing a link between the two Churches. In the 1876 Mulanthuruthy Synod, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Peter III tried to assert his authority over the Indian Church and its temporal wealth, but was resisted. As a result, the Indian Church divided later on into two groups, one supporting the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, the other the Bishop of India. In 1912, an autonomous Catholicossate was created in India. After long litigation between the two parties, the Supreme Court of India declared the legitimacy of the Indian Catholicossate in 1958. The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch Ignatius Yacob III and Catholicos Basilius Geevarghese II subsequently recognised each other, thus bringing peace to the Church communities. In 1964, the Syrian Patriarch was invited to India and, together with the Indian synod, installed Catholicos Augen I. In the 1970s, the Church was again divided by new disputes between the Syrian Patriarch and the Indian Church. Today, hope for full unity of the Orthodox Church of India is desired by many faithful on both sides.

The West Syrian liturgy is sung today in the local language, Malayalam, or is combined with Syriac and English.

The Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam was founded in 1815 and, since 1964, has been affiliated with Serampore University. Today it numbers about 130 students. It offers a four year theological training, and offers a faculty for post-graduate studies. The seminary has also introduced a correspondence course of religious education for laity. A committee has been appointed to study the improvement of liturgics and music and there is an institute for Church music on the seminary campus. Also situated in the seminary are the Church Archives and the Sophia Centre, which is a conference and retreat centre.

The Orthodox Church of India has an active social and youth ministry. The Syrian Student Conference was founded in 1908 and, in 1956, became the Mar Gregorius Orthodox Christian Student Movement (MGOCSM). The movement has seven sections, and runs art and science colleges, high schools, medical and technical auxiliaries, a literature section, missionary training, and the University Teachers' Orthodox Christian Association. The 150 local Student Movement branches lead programmes in liturgics and organize Bible studies, retreats, conferences, pilgrimages, social service projects, and audiovisual productions. An annual Conference is held every December in Kerala. The Student Centre at Kottayam opened in 1973. There are also a Sunday School Association, the Orthodox Christian Youth Movement of India, Women's Guilds, and a movement for young adolescent boys and girls.

The Church also administers 17 university colleges affiliated to Kottayam and Calcutta Universities, over 300 secondary schools, 13 industrial training centres, 5 teacher training schools, 21 hospitals and 17 shelters for the homeless and orphans, 8 mission centres, and 2 mission training centres. The Church has about 15 monasteries and 10 convents in India and counts about 180 monks and 170 nuns. The only Saint canonized by this Church is St Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (d.1902), Metropolitan of Parumala.

Today there are about fifteen different Church denominations in Kerala, due to divisions in the Christian community created by Catholic and Protestant missionary activities. The Anglicans have been present in India since the end of the 18th century.

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India has always sought an Orthodox ecclesiastical identity rooted in the Indian heritage. Among the

most notable Indian theologians are Mar Osthathios, Metropolitan of Niranam and Professor of theology and ethics in the theological seminary in Kottayam, Mar Paulos Gregorios, Metropolitan of New Dehli and principal of the theological seminary (d. 1996), Fr V.C. Samuel, former dean of the seminary, and the new dean Fr K.M.George Kondothra, all of whom have an international reputation through their writing and activities.

The Church also has a widespread diaspora which includes parishes in Malaysia, Singapore, the Gulf countries, in USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Austria, and the United Kingdom.

Part II

Steps Towards Unity

The Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland

Steps in the Dialogue

The dialogue between the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches began immediately after the Council of Chalcedon (451), on the initiative of some Byzantine Emperors or through concrete and direct ecclesiastical attempts at reunification. However, in the past, the Oriental Orthodox Churches were not considered as a single Church family. Consequently contacts and talks took place between the Byzantine Church and representatives of each of the Oriental Orthodox Churches separately.

In fact the initiatives of the Byzantine Emperors were considerably reduced after the Coptic and Syrian Churches organized independent and parallel hierarchies from the 6th century and the Armenian Church rejected the Council of Chalcedon. The only systematic attempt at a compromise solution to the tragic split in the ecclesiastical Body of the East was made by the Emperor Heraclius (610-641) and Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (610-38) during the period of the Persian wars. Independently of the imperial edict which imposed monothelitism (Ekthesis, 637) and even before this edict was issued, it had been demonstrated that there was a real possibility of rapprochement, in spite of the fact that the minimum requirement of an agreement between Patriarch Cyrus of Alexandria and the Coptic hierarchy proved insufficient (633). The Arab expansion in the Middle East and Northern Africa during the seventh century rendered impossible any systematic attempt at dialogue, since the Arabs limited ecclesiastical communication with the Church of Byzantium. Thus, the Church union initiatives of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and of the Byzantine Emperor were mainly directed towards the Armenian Church and, occasionally, towards the Oriental Orthodox Church of Syria.

The correspondence of Patriarch Photius of Constantinople with King Ashot of Armenia and with the Catholicos Zachariah of the Armenians (855-77) met with positive responses, as appears

from Photius' Encyclical Epistle (867), although no substantial result ensued from the venture. The Church union initiatives of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180) towards the Catholicos Gregory III (1113-66) and the Catholicos Nerses IV (1166-73) of the Armenians were of greater significance. The theological discussions of the Byzantine magister Theorianos (1170-71) with the hierarchy of the Armenian Church led to substantial points of agreement, but important disagreements on jurisdictional and liturgical matters surfaced at the same time. Representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches had also been invited, but they declined to participate until the discussions between the Byzantine envoy and the Armenians had been completed. In the meantime, the dissolution of the Byzantine State by the Fourth Crusade (1204) and the establishment of Latin states in the East interrupted the initiatives for Church union.

Nevertheless, unofficial theological dialogue continued unceasingly in the context of the local spiritual experience shared by the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. These two families of Churches co-existed in the same geographical areas, in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor, and each tasted of the rich fruits of the spiritual tradition of the other. This reciprocal spiritual cross-influencing of both traditions after the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) expressed itself in characteristic ways in the realms of organization, liturgy and theology, for they were based on parallel ways of life derived from the common tradition of the first centuries.

In the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period, the character of this double theological dialogue, i.e. on the official and unofficial levels, was in fact quite peculiar. Whereas on the unofficial level good results were obtained, official initiatives to obtain restoration of Church unity by means of a systematic theological dialogue failed to produce positive results. Historically conditioned prejudices, concrete ecclesiastical circumstances and practical difficulties made the road to unity

more difficult, in spite of the fact that the common roots of the spiritual experience of the believers could create a consciousness that the content of the faith in both traditions was one and the same. The extraordinarily unfavourable historical circumstances in which these Churches lived did not permit a continuous dialogue in a synodal frame. The official initiatives undertaken at the time rarely reached the appropriate synodal bodies.

In the present century, the joint meeting of the Inter-Orthodox Commission on Mount Athos in 1930 did consider the possibility of theological dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches, but the real impulse came only from the First Pan-Orthodox Conference on Rhodes (1961). It was taken up by the Third Pan-Orthodox Conference (Chambésy 1986), as well as at many other meetings, and gave rise to a conference decree. The Ecumenical Patriarch issued a corresponding encyclical, to which the Oriental Churches sent their answers.

As the Fourth Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Conference (Chambésy 1968) occupied itself with the relations between Orthodoxy and the other Christian Churches, it appointed a preparatory commission for dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches, whose mandate was to prepare for the dialogue in accordance with the wish already expressed at the pan-Orthodox level for such a dialogue (encyclicals and replies), and the wish expressed more than once on the Oriental Orthodox side for union with Orthodoxy (e.g. at the conference of these Churches in Addis Ababa in 1965). The commission was, first of all, to draw up lists of all the questions on the Orthodox side which were in need of clarification, so that these might subsequently be dealt with by the appropriate joint theological commission in the dialogue.

Already since the 1960s there had been unofficial meetings between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox theologians in the context of the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order, at meetings in Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Geneva (1970) and Addis Ababa (1971). These meetings resulted in significant agreement on individual questions which, at the time, were discussed with a view to future dialogue. The preparatory commission meeting in Addis Ababa in 1971 concluded that preparation on the Orthodox side was sufficient. Now it was up to the Oriental Orthodox Churches to name their corresponding theological commission so that the dialogue might be conducted in a responsible manner without interruption. The theological commissions of both Churches had already appointed a joint subcommission which

met in Athens in 1974 and in Addis Ababa a year later. The results of their consultations were submitted to the respective Church authorities for further decisions.

During another one-day session of the preparatory commission held at Chambésy in February 1979, the Coptic Patriarch Shenouda III paid a visit to the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This provided a further opportunity to emphasize, as both sides did, the need for a dialogue and a growing working relationship, and in the concluding communiqué it was stressed "once again" that with the naming of Oriental Orthodox representatives the official dialogue would begin: "Both sides are determined to present to each other those obstacles which have stood in the way of their working together toward communion with one another and of establishing peace in their regions."

The true and official beginning of the dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches dates back to an initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Patriarch Dimitrios, in the context of his exploratory talks with the various Orthodox local Churches to establish the agenda of the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (Chambésy, 1986), charged the person drafting the agenda to make contact with the heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches to instil some movement into the question of the dialogue.

In conversation, the Church leaders voiced their thanks for this initiative and expressed their urgent wish for an immediate start and an appropriate continuation of the dialogue. The Ecumenical Patriarch agreed to their wish and decided upon the immediate convocation of a Joint Theological Commission to be composed of representatives of all the Churches concerned.

The Official Dialogue began in Chambésy, 10-15 December 1985. In my introduction to the First Plenary Session of the Joint Theological Commission, I underscored several fundamental theses to which attention must be paid in order to ensure the unhindered progress of theological dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches:

"The theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches has been prepared with enthusiasm on both sides, a fact which allows one to predict that all the hopes that we are placing in you will be fully realized. Certainly, in the relations between the two Churches, one must not overlook the objective historical difficulties or the negative repercussions of certain interpretations of facts, whether intentional or accidental. The unmistakably positive theological preconditions have cleared a terrain which looks propitious for a

constructive appraisal of the perspectives of this dialogue (...)

"It is certain that the Joint Theological Commission will begin in a new spirit. It will look beyond the events of the past and correct the deviant interpretations of earlier generations, insofar as their arbitrariness is plain. Here I will limit myself to pointing out a few deviations significant for the way in which history is written in both the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches:

a) The hypothesis of Western historians, according to which the Council of Chalcedon (451) condemned Dioscorus of Alexandria for theological reasons, is not only erroneous but unfounded. The Council undertook proceedings of condemnation only because he had refused to respond to a summons explicitly extended to him three times (in keeping with the Holy Canons) to present an apology for the events of the Council of Ephesus (449);

b) The hypothesis according to which the Council of Chalcedon rejected the Christological theology of Alexandria and with it the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria clearly derives from too bold an interpretation, for it was the teaching of Eutyches which the Council condemned, not the Christology of Cyril. The legitimacy of Cyril's Christology, which the Council of Ephesus (431) upheld, was not called into question at Chalcedon, and in fact the development of the Christological teaching of the Orthodox Church after the Council of Chalcedon followed more and more the positions contained in Cyril's Twelve Anathemas. In these positions Cyril himself noted a capacity for compromise, as he wrote in his Definition of Agreement (*Horos dialogon*) in 433;

c) The hypothesis that there was a nationalistically-motivated reaction by the Egyptians and the Syrians against the pro-Chalcedonian policies of the Byzantine Emperor oversteps the bounds of historical research and in most cases leads to an arbitrarily psychologizing view of history;

d) The hypothesis according to which the Byzantine Church was taken prisoner by the Byzantine emperor in his struggle against the "anti-Chalcedonians" is unfounded;

e) The common opinion that the relationship of the Orthodox Church to the Oriental Orthodox Churches was hostile is exaggerated. On this point, the findings of historical research are irrefutable. In reality, the spiritual contacts between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches were never broken. On the contrary, reciprocal theological influences contributed to theological developments on both sides, particularly in the areas of Christology,

liturgy and iconology (...)"

In 1985, this first session in Chambésy proceeded to evaluate the previous ecclesiastical and theological meetings considered as useful material for the Commission's work. A main theme, "Towards a Common Christology," and four sub-themes were adopted for the future work of the Commission.

The second meeting of the Joint Theological Commission took place at the Monastery of St Bishoy, Egypt, in June 1989 and considered a draft text on Christological terminology drawn up by a joint theological subcommission which had met in Corinth in 1987. This second meeting published a communiqué.

The Joint Theological Commission then appointed a subcommission to study common pastoral problems and to prepare concrete suggestions for the next plenary session to be held at Chambésy in September 1990. The joint text entrusting them with their task emphasized that "our mutual understanding ... is not restricted to Christology; but rather includes the entire Faith of the One undivided Church of the first centuries." This was received extremely positively by the Orthodox as well as by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Accordingly, the joint subcommission on pastoral problems met in the St Bishoy Monastery in Egypt 31 January-4 February 1990. Among its recommendations were that full agreement on Christological questions as well as on baptism be proclaimed and that theological cooperation in ecumenical relations proceed systematically with the rest of the Christian world.

The third meeting of the Joint Theological Commission was held at Chambésy, 20-23 September 1990. In the text unanimously adopted by the members of the Theological Commission, it was emphasized that the theological work of this Commission had been completed. There were no further serious and essential theological problems to be solved. The principle of mutual sensitivity with regard to the common tradition of the Fathers also meant that the practices which, in part, differ were no longer considered grounds for maintaining ecclesiastical non-communication.

The next official meeting in Chambésy in 1993 helped to evaluate the truly historic theological work of the Joint Theological Commission and to facilitate the ecclesiastical procedures necessary for the restoration of full communion, i.e. to look for the possibility of lifting all anathemas; to find the competent ecclesiastical authority from each side for the lifting of the anathemas; to find canonical procedures to lift the anathemas and to examine the canonical and liturgical consequences of the proposed full communion.

The Understanding of the Official Theological Dialogue

The characteristic feature of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches is their common respect for the patristic tradition of the first centuries, which remains a constant and unshakeable criterion in the spiritual life of the two Churches and in their theological discussions.

The patristic tradition up to the Fourth Ecumenical Synod (451) contains all the elements of the authentic elaboration of the Apostolic tradition, in particular, the historical expressions of the teaching of the Faith, of divine worship, of ascetic spirituality, and of the life of the Church. These elements remained an invaluable spiritual heritage, even after disagreement about the Christological terminology of the decision of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) which led to the tragic fragmentation of the unity of the ecclesiastical Body.

The severity of the historical clashes and the long period of isolation in exceptionally trying times perpetuated a spirit of theological confrontation, although it did not interrupt a common reference to the authority of the common patristic tradition to which both sides turned in order to find either the justification of their own or the refutation of the opposing position.

The distinctive formulations of the two sides on the hypostatic union of Godhead and Manhood in the Person of Christ were projected as antithetical to the teaching of the great Fathers, St Athanasius, St Cyril, St Basil, St Gregory the Theologian and the other accredited Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries. Thus, the theological problem was all too obvious and exercised both sides as a permanent stimulus for theological polemics that were directed against each other. It is certain, however, that the prolongation for many centuries of the fragmentation of the ecclesiastical Body and the establishment of parallel hierarchies during the sixth century was always regarded as an anomalous situation in the historic realization of the mission of the Church. Although, from time to time, this brought about mutual anathemas and polemic treatises, it did not wipe out the common desire for the restoration of the unity of the Church that remained alive on both sides and continued to be fed from the common roots of patristic faith and ascetic spirituality.

After fifteen centuries of isolation, the historical value of patristic authority was confirmed by contemporary theological dialogue as the common basis for theological convergence of the two sides. Positive perspectives already emerged during the four unofficial theological meetings (1964, 1967, 1970, 1971), when the unifying power of the

patristic tradition, even on the most sensitive issues of Christological terminology and ecclesiological consciousness, was fully realized. The Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Consultation (Chambésy 1986) described with clarity the purpose of the official theological dialogue in the light of foreseeable agreement on Christological dogma. Given the prospect of such a Christological agreement, two additional questions were raised for the consideration of the Joint Theological Commission and for the restoration of ecclesiastical unity: a) study of the issue of the possibility of mutual lifting of anathemas pronounced by both sides; and b) acceptance of the dogmatic decisions and co-enumeration of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils.

It is obvious that the official expression of the consciousness of the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Consultation (Chambésy 1986) specified to a large degree the subject matter and the work of the Joint Commission for the Dialogue, which was able to study in depth, through special theological contributions and lengthy discussions, all the aspects of Christological dogma, especially with reference to points of acknowledged historical disagreements. The contributions and the work of the Joint Theological Commission proved by means of indisputable arguments that:

a) the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches have never accepted the heresy of monophysitism of the heresiarch Eutyches, but have from the very beginning anathematized both the heresiarch and his heresy;

b) the rejection of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod (451) was a consequence not, of course, of the condemnation of monophysitism, but of the impression that the Council of Chalcedon had turned away from the Christological teaching of the Twelve Chapters of St Cyril of Alexandria, which had been accepted by the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 and had encouraged the crypto-Nestorianism of the Antiochian theologians Theodoret of Cyrrihus and Ibas of Edessa, who had been fierce opponents of the Christological teaching of St Cyril of Alexandria;

c) the long-lasting theological discussions that followed the Fourth Ecumenical Council perpetuated the spirit of antagonism between the Alexandrians and the Antiochians through the frivolous policies of the Byzantine Emperors, so that even the right theological rapprochements between the decision of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and the teaching of St Cyril (the theology of the *enhypostaton*, the clarifications of the Christological terminology etc.) did not permit the abolition of manifold confusions;

d) the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553) through its dogmatic decisions, gave the authentic interpretation of the terminology of the decision of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod and excluded any of the acknowledged theological misinterpretations or confusions, but ecclesiastical fragmentation had already transpired and the restoration of ecclesiastical communion had become most difficult to achieve.

The establishment of these points concerning the causes of the division dictated the methodology of the work of the Joint Theological Commission, whose main aim was the confirmation of the full agreement of the two sides on Christological dogma. Following the exchange of special communications and the lengthy theological discussion in subcommittees and in plenary sessions, the Joint Theological Commission was able to formulate two common theological statements on the Christological issue, the first at St Bishoy Monastery (1989) and the second at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Chambésy, 1990). Both of these Common Statements declared full theological agreement on Christological dogma. It is noteworthy that the second Common Statement expressed this agreement in terms reminiscent of the dogmatic decisions of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Synods (paragraphs 1-7).

This theological agreement was acclaimed officially and with enthusiasm on both sides, because it was rightly seen as the foundation of the necessary presuppositions for the promotion of the ecclesiastical procedures for the restoration of communion. Nevertheless, the two Common Statements did cover fully the two adjunct and subtle issues: (a) the mutual lifting of anathemas; (b) the common co-enumeration of the seven Ecumenical Councils. With regard to the former issue, the second Common Statement declared, following a detailed examination of the whole matter, that the lifting of the specific historic anathemas is possible, since they were not imposed because of heretical teaching. With regard to the latter issue, the same document noted, on the one hand agreement in the dogmatic decisions of the seven Ecumenical Synods (paragraphs 1-7), and on the other, real difficulties in immediate co-enumeration of these Synods.

These points were confirmed at the meeting of the full Joint Theological Commission at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1993, on examination of the scholarly contributions of specialist researchers on these two issues in all their historical details and ecclesiastical implications. At the same time, it was unanimously accepted that the anathemas were not imposed because of a falling into heresy

and that they could be lifted by the competent synodical authorities of both sides, and that agreement on the Orthodoxy of the decisions of the seven Ecumenical Synods establishes the Unity of Faith, even though it does leave pending, for the present, the necessity of the common co-enumeration of the seven Ecumenical Synods.

The above theological observations and summarized evaluations lead us to conclude that the theological dialogue was inspired by the consciousness, on both sides, of the possibility of healing the traditional disagreements on the Christological dogma, as well as the common desire to restore ecclesiastical communion.

The tremendous importance of the conclusions of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches is self-evident, if the tragic consequences of the historic past separation are evaluated in all their depth, and if the broadest perspectives, which are opened up by the restoration of ecclesiastical communion, for the witness of the Orthodoxy to the contemporary world and especially to the countries of the Middle East, Asia and Africa, are foreseen.

The ministry of the Unity of the Church is a witness to Faith, as it is constantly confessed in the Creed. Any quarrelsome theological disposition or diminished sensitivity at the prospect of restoration of ecclesial Unity, when there is an official declaration of full agreement on the right Faith, should be regarded as unthinkable and certainly as reflecting a false understanding of the operation of the mystery of the Church in the history of Salvation.

Relations with the Eastern Orthodox Churches

*Statement by the Oriental Orthodox Churches
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1965*

Though in our concern for the reunion of Christendom we have in our minds the reunion of all churches, from the point of view of closer affinity in faith and spiritual kinship with us we need to develop different approaches in our relationship with them. This consideration leads us to take up the question of our relation with the Eastern Orthodox Churches as a first step. We shared the same faith and communion until the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and then the division took place.

Concerning the Christological controversy which caused the division, we hope that common studies in a spirit of mutual understanding can shed light on our understanding of each other's positions. So we have decided that we should institute formally a fresh study of the Christological doctrine in its historical setting to be undertaken by our scholars, taking into account the earlier studies on this subject as well as the informal consultations held in connection with the meetings of the World Council of Churches. Meanwhile, we express our agreement that our churches could seek a closer relationship and cooperate with the Eastern Orthodox Churches in practical affairs.

*Extracts from the official statement of the
Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches held in
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 7-14 January, 1965, and
published in The Oriental Orthodox Churches,
Addis Ababa, January 1965, p.109-110*

On the Unity of the Faith between the Chalcedonians and the Non-Chalcedonian Churches

*Joint Declaration of the Patriarchs of the Middle East
St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 16-19 November 1987*

We give thanks to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the joy of the spiritual communion which has been granted to us from on high, and which has allowed our meeting in the holy monastery of St Bishoy, Egypt, on the occasion of the Executive Committee meeting of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), 16-19 November 1987, on the invitation of our sister Coptic Orthodox Church which has welcomed us with goodwill.

It is the first time that we, the Primate of the Byzantine and Oriental churches, that are members of the MECC and that have their seat in the Middle East, meet to reflect together on our common task in the current situation in the Middle East

While reflecting once more on the deeply-rooted inner unity of faith existing between our two families of Churches, we rejoice in realizing how much we have advanced in our rediscovery and in the growing consciousness among our people of that inner unity of Faith in the Incarnate Lord.

Attempts by theologians of both families aimed at overcoming the misunderstandings inherited from the past centuries of alienation towards one another have happily reached the same conclusion that fundamentally and essentially we on both sides have preserved the same Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in spite of diverse formulations and resulting controversies.

We welcome all the efforts made on the international or regional levels, and noting in particular that which has been done on the regional level, in the meetings of Balamand, Lebanon in 1972, and of Pendeli, Greece, in 1978, we affirm our togetherness in the true understanding of the Person of Christ, who being God of God, only-begotten Son of the Father, became truly man, fully assumed our human nature without losing or diminishing or changing His Divine Nature. Being perfect God, He became perfect man, without confusion, without separation.

In the light of this conviction, we recommend

that the official dialogue on both the regional (Middle East) and the international levels be pursued through common endeavours in the healthy process of clarifying and enhancing our commonness in faith and dispelling the misapprehensions of the past, thus preparing the way towards the full recovery of our communion.

We urge our people to continue to deepen their consciousness in the deep commonality of faith and to relate to one another as brothers and sisters who share the same Gospel, the same faith and the same commission entrusted to them by their common Lord.

Thanks be to God that ancient controversies and rivalries have given way to a new era of sincere and open dialogue and communal brotherhood. We pray that these most difficult and crucial times in the Middle East may stimulate all of us to see more clearly the command of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we may be one according to his will (John 10) and His prayer (John 17).

Pope Shenouda III, Coptic Orthodox Church
Patriarch Parthenios III, Orthodox
Patriarchate of Alexandria
Patriarch Ignatios IV, Orthodox Church of
Antioch
Catholicos Karekin II, Armenian Apostolic
Church, Patriarchate of Cilicia

(Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I. Iwas, Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, not present at the meeting, also expressed his accord with the statement.)

I. Bria, The Sense of Ecumenical Tradition, WCC, Geneva, 1991, p. 117.

In French in SOP, Paris, France, No. 126, March 1988.

Consultation on Cooperation Between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Youth Movements

SYNDESMOS Final Document

St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 20-26 May 1991

We, 25 youth representatives from Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches in 11 different countries met in St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 20-26 May, 1991. This meeting was made possible with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch and Pope Shenouda III and of His Holiness Patriarch and Pope Parthenios III and by the gracious hospitality of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Bishoprics of Youth, and Public, Ecumenical and Social Services.

We rejoice in the fact that our Churches have, by God's will, in the official dialogue, "clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion". (Second Agreed Statement of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches, Chambésy, Switzerland, 23-28 September, 1990). In accordance with the recommendations on pastoral questions of this official dialogue and the resolution made by the XIII SYNDESMOS General Assembly (Boston, USA, 1989), SYNDESMOS convened this Consultation, with the aim of enabling Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements to support the imminent re-establishment of communion between our Churches.

During the Consultation we heard three presentations which provided the basis for our deliberations: Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland spoke on the History and Progress of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches; Bishop Moussa, Coptic Orthodox Bishop for Youth, and Metropolitan George (Khodr) of Byblos and Batroun both spoke on Challenges for Cooperation on Pastoral Questions. We discussed these two themes in groups: How can SYNDESMOS support, at the youth level, the official dialogue between the two families of Churches? We shared a common worship life reflecting our varied liturgical traditions.

We agreed that youth should participate in making the official theological agreed statements an ecclesial reality. This can be achieved initially by informing our young people of the results of the official dialogue between our Churches, which, in turn, will help the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox youth to know and love each other better, and to live their common faith together, thus preparing themselves for the restoration of communion.

We agreed to make the following recommendations:

1/That all Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements prepare their members for the imminent communion of our Churches through information, common activities and close cooperation. This is particularly important in those regions where our Churches co-exist

2/That SYNDESMOS publish and distribute information about the official dialogue. This information could take the form of a booklet containing a short history of each of the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches and their youth movements, and a chapter summarizing the history of the dialogue between our Churches up to the recent agreed statements.

3/That SYNDESMOS actively encourage the close cooperation on a local and regional level of youth movements of both families of our Churches. This cooperation could take the form of regional and local committees, joint seminars and retreats with biblical and liturgical studies and discussions on these themes of Tradition and renewal.

4/That SYNDESMOS initiate a programme of contacts and exchanges between students and teachers of Theology from both families of Churches.

5/That SYNDESMOS amend its Constitution

to allow Oriental Orthodox youth movements and theological schools to become full affiliate members of SYNDESMOS, thereby enabling these movements to participate fully in the decision-making and life of SYNDESMOS.

As the Consultation concluded on the day on Pentecost, we thanked God who through His Holy Spirit had brought us together in our common Orthodox Faith, and guided us in an atmosphere of Hope and Love.

Statement of the Coptic Orthodox Church on the Theological Dialogue

Letter of Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette to Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, Egypt, November 1990

The following letter was sent by Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette, General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and co-president of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue, to Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, the other co-president of the Joint Commission, in November 1990.

Dear Brother in Christ,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, hoping to be always together in the charity of love and cooperation.

I would like to inform Your Eminence that the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church, headed and presided by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark, on its meeting in Cairo on 12 November 1990, has accepted the Agreed Statement of our [last] commission, considering that the lifting of the anathemas will happen simultaneously as stated in the agreement which we have signed in Chambésy on 28 September 1990.

Also the same Synod had accepted the Agreed Statement of St Bishoy Monastery (June 1989) in its previous meeting of June 1990.

With my best wishes to Your Eminence for the success of our Joint Commission in its mandate.

Yours in Christ,

[signed] Metropolitan Bishoy

On the Relations between the Eastern and Syrian Orthodox Churches

*Statement of the Orthodox Church of Antioch
Damascus, 12 November 1991*

*To the Members of the Holy Synod of Antioch
Prayers to God and fraternal greetings in our
Lord, Jesus Christ*

It is our pleasure to inform you that pertaining to the Holy Synod decision concerning our unity with the Holy Syrian Orthodox Church, a meeting was held in Damascus at the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate on 22 July, 1991. The following hierarchs attended the meeting: His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius (Zakka) I. (Iwas), His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatios IV, Metropolitan George Khodr, Metropolitan Malatius Barnaba, Metropolitan Aphram Barsoum, Metropolitan Isaac Saka, and Bishop Paul Al-Souki.

After the discussion the participants consented to issue a draft, which was preceded by a letter and whose contents were agreed upon to be discussed at the next meeting. It will assume its official status after the agreement of the Holy Synod, and what it sees appropriate to the matter during the forthcoming Holy Synod meeting.

The Lord is always with us.

*Patriarch Ignatios IV
Damascus, Syria.*

A Synodal and Patriarchal Letter

**To All Our Children, Protected By God,
of the Holy See of Antioch**

Beloved:

You must have heard of the continuous efforts for decades by our Church with the sister Syrian Orthodox Church to foster a better knowledge and understanding of both Churches, whether on the dogmatical or pastoral level. These attempts are nothing but a natural expression that the Orthodox Churches, and especially those within the Holy See of Antioch, are called to articulate the will of the Lord that all may be one, just as the Son is One with the Heavenly Father (John 10:30).

It is our duty and that of our brothers in the Syrian Orthodox Church to witness to Christ in

our Eastern region where He was born, preached, suffered, was buried and rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sent down His Holy and Life-Giving Spirit upon His holy apostles.

All the meetings, the fellowship, the oral and written declarations meant that we belong to One Faith even though history had manifested our division more than the aspects of our unity.

All this has called upon our Holy Synod of Antioch to bear witness to the progress of our Church in the See of Antioch towards unity that preserves for each Church its authentic Oriental heritage whereby the one Antiochian Church benefits from its sister Church and is enriched by its traditions, literature and holy rituals.

Every endeavour and pursuit in the direction of the coming together of the two Churches is based on the conviction that this orientation is from the Holy Spirit, and it will give the Eastern Orthodox image more light and radiance, that it has lacked for centuries before.

Having recognized the efforts done in the direction of unity between the two Churches, and being convinced that this direction was inspired by the Holy Spirit and projects a radiant image of Eastern Christianity overshadowed during many centuries, the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch saw the need to give a concrete expression of the close fellowship between the two Churches, the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Eastern Orthodox for the edification of their faithful.

Thus, the following decisions were taken:

1) We affirm the total and mutual respect of the spirituality, heritage and Holy Fathers of both Churches. The integrity of both the Byzantine and Syriac liturgies is to be preserved.

2) The heritage of the Fathers in both Churches and their traditions as a whole should be integrated into Christian education curricula and theological studies. Exchanges of professors and students are to be enhanced.

3) Both Churches shall refrain from accepting any faithful from one Church into the

membership of the other, irrespective of all motivations or reasons.

4) Meetings between the two Churches, at the level of their Synods, according to the will of the two Churches, will be held whenever the need may arise.

5) Every Church will remain the reference and authority for its faithful, pertaining to matters of personal status (marriage, divorce, adoption etc.)

6) If bishops of the two Churches participate at a holy baptism or funeral service, the one belonging to the Church of the baptized or deceased will preside. In case of a holy matrimony service, the bishop of the bridegroom's Church will preside.

7) The above mentioned is not applicable to the concelebration in the Divine Liturgy.

8) What applies to bishops applies equally to the priests of both Churches.

9) In localities where there is only one priest, from either Church, he will celebrate services for the faithful of both Churches, including the Divine Liturgy, pastoral duties and holy matrimony. He will keep an independent record for each Church and transmit that of the sister Church to its authorities.

10) If two priests of the two Churches happen to be in a locality where there is only one Church, they take turns in making use of its premises.

11) If a bishop from one Church and a priest from the sister Church happen to concelebrate a service, the first will preside even when it is the priest's parish.

12) Ordinations into the holy orders are performed by the authorities of each Church for its own members. It would be advisable to invite the faithful of the sister Church to attend.

13) Godfathers, godmothers (in baptism) and witnesses in holy matrimony can be chosen from the members of the sister Church.

14) Both Churches will exchange visits and will cooperate in the various areas of social, cultural and educational work.

We ask God's help to continue strengthening our relations with the sister Church, and with other Churches, so that we all become one community under one Shepherd.

12.11.1991

**Patriarch Ignatios IV
Damascus.**

Translation from the original Arabic text.

Statement of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the Official Theological Dialogue

Decisions of the Holy Synod, Bucharest, Romania, 8-9 December 1994

The following text is from the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, contained in a letter of Patriarch Teoctist addressed to the Orthodox co-President Metropolitan Damaskinos of the Joint Theological Commission:

Following the meeting in Bucharest on the 25th October 1994 of the two co-Presidents of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches with the members of the Commission of the Romanian Orthodox Church for the theological dialogue between the two families of Churches, the Holy Synod of our Church, in its session of 8-9 December 1994, analyzing the conclusions of that meeting, and based on the documents elaborated during the official meetings of the Joint Commission for the dialogue, has decided:

1. To take note of and to approve the conclusions of the dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, as the result of the talks held at the Patriarchal Residence in Bucharest by the members of the Commission of the Romanian Orthodox Church for the theological dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the two co-Presidents of the Joint Commission of the dialogue;

2. To take into consideration, on the one hand, the special context in which the anathemas were pronounced, a context which was characterized by division, by the absence of a consensus in the formulation of the confession of the faith, as well as by the absence of fraternal charity, and, on the other hand, the current context in which the lifting of anathemas is discussed, and which is characterized by a spirit of reconciliation, of mutual forgiveness and of the common confession of the same content of the common faith;

3. To consider that the equivalent of the canonical authority of the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon can today be represented by the consensus of the Churches organized in Holy Local Councils (national, autocephalous and

autonomous), belonging to the Byzantine Orthodox family as well as to the Oriental Orthodox family. Consequently, the possibility of the real lifting of the anathemas is to be studied, through the consensus of the Holy Local Councils expressed by the signatures placed on common agreed text, and then, by a ceremonial concelebration and Eucharistic communion of the Primates of these Churches, gathered together in a joint Orthodox conference;

4. To give the professors of Universal Church History and Patristics of the Faculties of Theology of the Romanian Patriarchate the task of studying the results of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches with a view of revising the chapters concerning the family of Oriental Orthodox Churches;

5. To present the results of the dialogue between the two families of Orthodox Churches to gatherings of clergy in order to inform the priests and to contribute to the creation of a favourable opinion of these results within our Church;

6. To communicate all these decisions to the Secretariat of the Joint Commission for the international theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, in Geneva.

It is our hope that the decisions taken by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church will help to advance us on the way which is opening before us and which leads to the fulfillment of complete communion between the two families of Orthodox Churches.

Translated from: Episkepsis, Geneva, No. 516, March 1995

Statement of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Official Theological Dialogue

Decisions of the Holy Synod, Moscow, Russia, December 1994

The following text was issued in the decisions of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in December 1994 and refers primarily to the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue of 1990:

The Synod of hierarchs, having heard the report of the Theological Commission of the Holy Synod on the question of the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches [1990] between the Joint Commission between the Theological Dialogue of the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, presented by His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk, President of the Theological Commission, has decided:

1. To approve the report of the Synodal Theological Commission;
2. To judge that the "Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches" cannot be considered as a definitive text and that it is necessary for the Joint Commission of the Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches to continue its work;
3. To give to the Synodal Theological Commission the task of preparing a more detailed study of the previous meetings of theologians of both sides as well as of the discussions with the members of the theological dialogue from other Orthodox Churches. Following these steps the Russian Orthodox Church will make its opinion known to the Joint Commission of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches;
4. Having in mind the need for the People of God, who - according to the message of the Eastern Patriarchs - are the "guardian of the ancient piety", to participate in the cause of unity, the Synod considers that the time has come for organizing a discussion of the question with the participation of the whole Church.

Translation from: Episkepsis, Geneva, No. 516, March 1995

Statement of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Official Theological Dialogue

Decisions of the Bishops' Council on the Report of the Synodal Theological Commission, Moscow, Russia, February 1997

Having heard the report of the Synodal Theological Commission of the Russian Orthodox Church presented by His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of all Belarus, on the history and theological pre-conditions for participation in the work of international Christian organizations and in bilateral dialogues with non-Orthodox Churches, and also on the dialogue between the Orthodox and the Oriental (non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox Churches, the blessed Bishops' Council decided:

1. To approve the report of the Synodal Theological Commission.

(...) 4. Having considered the information on the dialogue between the Orthodox and the Oriental (non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox Churches, to welcome the spirit of fraternity, mutual understanding and common aspiration to be faithful to the Apostolic and Patristic Tradition expressed by the Joint Commission of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in "The Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to the Churches" (Chambesy, Switzerland, 1990).

"The Statement" should not be regarded as a final document sufficient for the restoration of full communion between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches as it contains ambiguities in some Christological formulations. To express hope in this regard that Christological formulations should be clarified in the course of studying the questions pertaining to the restoration of church communion between the two families of Churches of the Orthodox tradition (of the Orthodox Churches).

5. To note that the Russian Orthodox Church has special historical and ecclesiastical reasons and grounds to promote the success of the dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Our Church throughout her history has protected and defended the Orthodox East. An obvious example are the activities of the Imperial Palestine Society and of the Russian Orthodox Mission in

Jerusalem, the works of Bishop Kyrill Naumov and Archimandrite Antonin Kapustin, the activities of Bishop Porfiry Uspensky in the cause of reunion with the Coptic Church, of Prof. V. Bolotov of reunion with the Urmi Assyrian Nestorians, and of Prof. B. Turaev on the rapprochement with the Ethiopian Church.

6. To entrust the Holy Synod and under its guidance the Department for External Church Relations, the Education Committee, the Department for Religious Education and Catechization, the Department for Mission and the Publications Board to develop a plan of scholarly conferences and symposiums, of the publication of theological and historical and informative nature which would help introduce clergymen and faithful of our Church to the problems and development of the theological dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Part III
The Unofficial Dialogue

The Four Unofficial Conversations: An Experience of Joy and Hope

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios and Nikos Nissiotis

The distinction between "Eastern" and "Oriental" Orthodox Churches is often not only untranslatable into other languages, but also unfamiliar even to English-speaking people. It is a convention recently established for distinguishing between the two different Church traditions of Eastern Christianity.

With the term "Eastern" we refer to the one Church which is constituted by the four ancient Patriarchates (Constantinople, which enjoyed a primacy of love and honour, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem), the modern Patriarchates of Russia, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria, and the autocephalous Churches like Cyprus, Greece, Poland, and so on. This distinction into autocephalous Churches has been made from ancient times for administrative reasons, although these Churches compose one Church communion, fully identifying doctrine and Church life throughout the whole of the Christian era, and recognizing as expressions of this identity of the One Apostolic Faith, the seven Ecumenical Councils. Due to the great movements of emigration, the "Eastern" Church is spread throughout the whole world today.

With the term "Oriental" we refer to the five ancient Churches of Egypt, Syria, Armenia, India and Ethiopia. They practise the same ancient tradition and are organized as autocephalous local Churches. Due to the same emigration movements during the last two centuries, the "Oriental" Churches are also to be found in all parts of the world.

The breach of ecclesiastical communion between the "Eastern" and the "Oriental" came about in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era as a result of controversies about the relation between the human and divine natures in Christ which began at the Council of Chalcedon (451) and continued for at least two centuries. These controversies involved also the whole of the Church both in the East and in the West.

The "Eastern" Church together with the Church of the West accepted the Christological

"horos" of Chalcedon, acknowledging this council as the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Church history, while the "Oriental" Churches rejected the teaching of this Council and never recognized it as the fourth one (accepting only the first three).

These two Church traditions of the East, although they have led a separate historical life, show today very great similarities in dogmatic faith, ecclesiology, liturgy and spirituality. This is due to their common fidelity to the ancient tradition, thought, life, and principles of Church authority and administration. This became evident after the great schism between Rome and the "Eastern" Church (1054). These similarities have been made more manifest in the contemporary ecumenical movement. They have encouraged reciprocal trends on both sides towards re-establishing a particular and closer relationship between them today. They have also stimulated the organization of a special dialogue for restoring full Church communion amongst them.

Throughout the 1500 years since Chalcedon, there have been several attempts at reconciliation, often undertaken by Byzantine emperors, but also by others. Several times the two sides came close to a reconciliation; but alas, to this day, the breach continues.

A new series of unofficial conversations began in 1964 in connection with the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in Aarhus, Denmark. Four such unofficial conversations were held:

Aarhus, Denmark: 11-15 August 1964

Bristol, England: 25-29 July 1967

Geneva, Switzerland: 16-21 August 1970

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: 22-23 January 1971

These conversations covered most of the issues on which agreement was necessary before communion could be restored. We were privileged to be the organizers and to be among the participants of all four conversations.

The full reports of these conversations were

edited by us and published by "The Greek Orthodox Theological Review", the half-yearly official publication of the Holy Cross School of Theology, Hellenic College, 15 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146, USA (Vol. X:2, Winter 1964-65; Vol. XIII:2, Fall, 1968; Vol. XVI:1 and 2, Spring and Fall, 1971). We are grateful to the Review for permission to reprint a selection of the papers and the texts of the four agreed statements. The selection is somewhat arbitrary. No selection can hope to do justice to the multifaceted richness of all the presentations and discussions which together occupy more than 600 pages.

Those of us who were present were grateful to God for the mostly joyful, at times painful, but always fruitful, learning experience of the four unofficial consultations. We want very much to share this experience with others who are interested and this is the purpose of this modest publication.

We began our joint efforts in 1962 to organize the Aarhus consultation. There was much scepticism at the beginning about the possible benefits of taking up an issue which had frustrated greater persons in previous centuries. But ours is an age of frequent ecumenical contacts, and our informal gatherings at various meetings of the World Council of Churches gave us new hope. We were both in Geneva at that time, Metropolitan Gregorios (then Fr Paul Verghese) in the General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches, and Professor Nikos Nissiotis at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey. We are very much indebted to the Faith and Order Commission which consistently supported our efforts, viewed our meetings as a primary concern towards re-establishing Church unity and financed them. We are especially grateful to Dr. Lukas Vischer former Director of the Secretariat of the Faith and Order Commission, who gave us encouragement and support and also took an active part in all four meetings. We express now our thanks also to the present Director of the Secretariat, Prof. William H. Lazareth, who has enthusiastically and efficiently commissioned and made possible the present publication.

Our initial success at Aarhus in 1964 was a joyful surprise. Outstanding scholars of both sides, belonging to two traditions not in communion with each other for a millenium and a half, could confess together that "we recognize in each other the one Orthodox Faith of the Church. We were criticized by non-participants, even by some very prominent theologians, for being too hasty in making such a statement. But most of the participating theologians were interested in pursuing the dialogue and clearing the issues. The

Churches have all stood by us and encouraged us. In this connection we owe an enormous debt of gratitude for the enthusiastic support we received from His Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople of revered memory, and from several other heads of Churches.

From the beginning our unofficial work was meant to be preparatory for official action to be taken by the Churches themselves. It remains that, an offering to be accepted and used as deemed fit by the Churches. We have also in our third consultation in Geneva (1970) proposed a series of practical steps to be taken. In the light of our experience and discussions, we would respectfully urge our respective Church authorities to explore the ways and means for continuing the work which so hopefully started with these four unofficial consultations. We regard this question as an urgent and most profitable one in the service of Church unity as a whole. We are certain that if further official steps on behalf of our Churches were taken, we would, with the grace of God, witness an encouraging development in the near future towards sharing in the one unbroken Church tradition.

From Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology
WCC Geneva 1981, p. ix-xii

First Unofficial Consultation Agreed Statement

Aarhus, Denmark, 11-15 August 1964

Ever since the second decade of our century representatives of our Orthodox Churches, some accepting seven Ecumenical Councils and others accepting three, have often met in ecumenical gatherings. The desire to know each other and to restore our unity in the one Church of Christ has been growing all these years. Our meeting together in Rhodos at the Pan-Orthodox Conference of 1961 confirmed this desire.

Out of this has come about our unofficial gathering of fifteen theologians from both sides, for three days of informal conversations, in connection with the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Aarhus, Denmark.

We have spoken to each other in the openness of charity and with the conviction of truth. All of us have learned from each other. Our inherited misunderstandings have begun to clear up. We recognize in each other the one Orthodox faith of the Church. Fifteen centuries of alienation have not led us astray from the faith of our Fathers.

In our common study of the Council of Chalcedon, the well-known phrase used by our common Father in Christ, St Cyril of Alexandria, *mia physis* (or *mia hypostasis*) *tou Theou logou sesarkomene* (the one *physis* or *hypostasis* of God's Word Incarnate) with its implications, was at the centre of our conversations. On the essence of the Christological dogma we found ourselves in full agreement. Through the different terminologies used by each side, we saw the same truth expressed. Since we agree in rejecting without reservation the teaching of Eutyches as well as of Nestorius, the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Council of Chalcedon does not entail the acceptance of either heresy. Both sides found themselves fundamentally following the Christological teaching of the one undivided Church as expressed by St Cyril.

The Council of Chalcedon (451), we realize, can only be understood as reaffirming the decisions of Ephesus (431), and best understood in the light of the later Council of Constantinople (553). All councils, we have recognized, have to be

seen as stages in an integral development and no council or document should be studied in isolation.

The significant role of political, sociological and cultural factors in creating tension between factions in the past should be recognized and studied together. They should not, however, continue to divide us. We see the need to move forward together. The issue at stake is of crucial importance to all churches in the East and West alike and for the unity of the whole Church of Jesus Christ

The Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the Church of Jesus Christ, will lead us together to the fullness of truth and of love. To that end we respectfully submit to our Churches the fruit of our common work of three days together. Many practical problems remain, but the same Spirit Who led us together here will, we believe, continue to lead our churches to a common solution of these.

From Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology, WCC Geneva 1981, p.3-4

Second Unofficial Consultation Agreed Statement

Bristol, England, 25-29 July 1967

I

1. We give thanks to God that we have been able to come together for the second time as a study group, with the blessing of the authorities of our respective Churches. In Aarhus we discovered much common ground for seeking closer ties among our Churches. In Bristol we have found several new areas of agreement. Many questions still remain to be studied and settled. But we wish to make a few common affirmations.

2. God's infinite love for mankind, by which He has both created and saved us, is our starting point for apprehending the mystery of the union of perfect Godhead and perfect Manhood in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is for our salvation that God the Word became one of us. Thus He who is consubstantial with the Father became by the Incarnation consubstantial also with us. By His infinite grace God has called us to attain to His uncreated glory. God became by nature man that man may become by grace God. The Manhood of Christ thus reveals and realizes the true vocation of man. God draws us into fulness of Communion with Himself in the Body of Christ, that we may be transfigured from glory to glory. It is in this soteriological perspective that we have approached the Christological question.

3. We were reminded again of our common Fathers in the universal Church - St Ignatius and St Irenaeus, St Antony and St Athanasius, St Basil and St Gregory of Nyssa and St John Chrysostom, St Ephrem Syrus and St Cyril of Alexandria and many others of venerable memory. Based on their teaching, we see the integral relation between Christology and soteriology and also the close relation of both to the doctrine of God and to the doctrine of man, to ecclesiology and to spirituality, and to the whole liturgical life of the Church.

4. Ever since the fifth century, we have used different formulae to confess our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect Man. Some of us affirm two natures, wills and energies hypostatically united in the One Lord

Jesus Christ. Some of us affirm one united divine-human nature, will and energy in the same Christ. But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition. Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the Godhead and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties, in the one Christ. Those who speak in terms of "two" do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of "one" do not thereby commingle or confuse. The "without division, without separation" of those who say "two," and the "without change, without confusion" of those who say "one" need to be specially underlined, in order that we may understand each other.

5. In this spirit, we have discussed also the continuity of doctrine in the Councils of the Church, and especially the monenergistic and monothelite controversies of the seventh century. All of us agree that the human will is neither absorbed nor suppressed by the divine will in the Incarnate Logos, nor are they contrary one to the other. The uncreated and created natures, with the fulness of their natural properties and faculties, were united without confusion or separation, and continue to operate in the one Christ, our Saviour. The position of those who wish to speak of one divine-human will and energy united without confusion or separation does not appear therefore to be incompatible with the decision of the Council of Constantinople (680-81), which affirms two natural wills and two natural energies in Him existing indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, unconfusedly.

6. We have sought to formulate several questions which need further study before the full communion between our Churches can be restored. But we are encouraged by the common mind we have on some fundamental issues to pursue our task of common study in the hope that despite the difficulties we have encountered the Holy Spirit will lead us on into full agreement.

II

7. Our mutual contacts in the recent past have convinced us that it is a first priority for our Churches to explore with a great sense of urgency adequate steps to restore the full communion between our Churches, which has been sadly interrupted for centuries now. Our conversations at Aarhus in 1964 and at Bristol in 1967 have shown us that, in order to achieve this end by the grace of God, our Churches need to pursue certain preliminary actions.

8. The remarkable measure of agreement so far reached among the theologians on the Christological teaching of our Churches should soon lead to the formulation of a joint declaration in which we express together in the same formula our common faith in the One Lord Jesus Christ whom we all acknowledge to be perfect God and perfect Man. This formula, which will not have the status of a confession of faith or of a creed, should be drawn up by a group of theologians officially commissioned by the Churches, and submitted to the Churches for formal and authoritative approval, or for suggestions for modifications which will have to be considered by the Commission before a final text is approved by the Churches.

9. In addition to proposing a formula of agreement on the basic Christological faith in relation to the nature, will and energy of our one Lord Jesus Christ, the joint theological commission will also have to examine the canonical, liturgical and jurisdictional problems involved- e.g. anathemas and liturgical deprecations by some Churches of theologians regarded by others as doctors and saints of the Church, the acceptance and non-acceptance of some Councils, and the jurisdictional assurances and agreements necessary before formal restoration of communion.

10. We submit this agreed statement to the authorities and peoples of our Churches with great humility and deep respect. We see our task as a study group only in terms of exploring together common possibilities which will facilitate action by the Churches. Much work still needs to be done, both by us and by the Churches, in order that the unity for which our Lord prayed may become real in the life of the Churches.

From Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology, WCC Geneva 1981, p.5-7

Third Unofficial Consultation Summary of Conclusions

Geneva, Switzerland, 16-21 August 1970

1. The third unofficial consultation between the theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox Churches was held from 16-21 August, 1970 at the Cénacle, Geneva, in an atmosphere of openness and trust which has been built up thanks to the two previous conversations at Aarhus (1964) and Bristol (1967).

Reaffirmation of Christological Agreement

2. We have reaffirmed our agreements at Aarhus and Bristol on the substance of our common Christology. On the essence of the Christological dogma our two traditions, despite fifteen centuries of separation, still find themselves in full and deep agreement with the universal tradition of the one undivided Church. It is the teaching of the blessed Cyril on the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ that we both affirm, though we may use differing terminology to explain this teaching. We both teach that He who is consubstantial with the Father according to Godhead became consubstantial also with us according to humanity in the Incarnation, that He who was before all ages begotten from the Father, was in these last days for us and for our salvation born of the blessed Virgin Mary, and that in Him the two natures are united in the one *hypostasis* of the Divine Logos, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man, with all the properties and faculties that belong to Godhead and to humanity.

3. The human will and energy of Christ are neither absorbed nor suppressed by His divine will and energy nor are the former opposed to the latter, but are united together in perfect concord without division or confusion; He who wills and acts is always the One *hypostasis* of the Logos Incarnate. One is Emmanuel, God and Man, Our Lord and Saviour, Whom we adore and worship and who yet is one of us.

4. We have become convinced that our agreement extends beyond Christological doctrine

to embrace other aspects also of the authentic tradition, though we have not discussed all matters in detail. But through visits to each other, and through study of each other's liturgical traditions and theological and spiritual writings, we have rediscovered, with a sense of gratitude to God, our mutual agreement in the common tradition of the One Church in all important matters - liturgy and spirituality, doctrine and canonical practice, in our understanding of the Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, on the nature of the Church as the Communion of Saints with its ministry and Sacraments, and on the life of the world to come when our Lord and Saviour shall come in all his glory.

5. We pray that the Holy Spirit may continue to draw us together to find our full unity in the one Body of Christ. Our mutual agreement is not merely verbal or conceptual; it is a deep agreement that impels us to beg our Churches to consummate our union by bringing together again the two lines of tradition which have been separated from each other for historical reasons for such a long time. We work in the hope that our Lord will grant us full unity so that we can celebrate together that unity in the Common Eucharist. That is our strong desire and final goal.

Some Differences

6. Despite our agreement on the substance of the tradition, the long period of separation has brought about certain differences in the formal expression of that tradition. These differences have to do with three basic ecclesiological issues - (a) the meaning and place of certain Councils in the life of the Church, (b) the anathematization or acclamation as Saints of certain controversial teachers in the Church, and (c) the jurisdictional questions related to manifestation of the unity of the Church at local, regional and world levels.

(a) Theologians from the Eastern Orthodox Church have drawn attention to the fact that for them the Church teaches that the seven

ecumenical Councils which they acknowledge have an inner coherence and continuity that make them a single indivisible complex to be viewed in its entirety of dogmatic definition. Theologians from the Oriental Orthodox Church feel, however, that the authentic Christological tradition has so far been held by them on the basis of the three ecumenical Councils, supplemented by the liturgical and patristic tradition of the Church. It is our hope that further study will lead to the solution of this problem by the decision of our Churches.

As for the Councils and their authority for the tradition, we all agree that the Councils should be seen as charismatic events in the life of the Church rather than as an authority over the Church; where some Councils are acknowledged as true Councils, whether as ecumenical or as local, by the Church's tradition, their authority is to be seen as coming from the Holy Spirit. Distinction is to be made not only between the doctrinal definitions and canonical legislation of a Council, but also between the true intention of the dogmatic definition of a Council and the particular terminology in which it is expressed, the latter of which has less authority than the intention.

(b) The reuniting of the two traditions which have their own separate continuity poses certain problems in relation to certain revered teachers of one family being condemned or anathematized by the other. It may not be necessary formally to lift these anathemas, nor for these teachers to be recognised as Saints by the condemning side. But the restoration of Communion obviously implies, among other things, that formal anathemas and condemnation of revered teachers of the other side should be discontinued, as in the case of Leo, Dioscurus, Severus, and others.

(c) It is recognised that jurisdiction is not to be regarded only as an administrative matter, but that it also touches the question of ecclesiology in some aspects. The traditional pattern of territorial autonomy or autocephaly has its own pragmatic, as well as theological, justification. The manifestation of local unity in the early centuries was to have one bishop, with one college of presbyters united in one eucharist. In more recent times pragmatic considerations, however, have made it necessary in some cases to have more than one bishop and one eucharist in one city, but it is important that the norm required by the nature of the Church be safeguarded at least in principle and expressed in Eucharistic Communion and in local conciliar structures.

7. The universal tradition of the Church does not demand uniformity in all details of doctrinal formulation, forms of worship and canonical practice. But the limits of pluralistic variability

need to be more clearly worked out, in the areas of the forms of worship, in terminology of expressing the faith, in spirituality, in canonical practice, in administrative or jurisdictional patterns, and in the other structural or formal expressions of tradition, including the names of teachers and Saints in the Church.

Towards a Statement of Reconciliation

8. We reaffirm the suggestion made by the Bristol consultation that one of the next steps is for the Churches of our two families to appoint an official joint commission to examine those things which have separated us in the past, to discuss our mutual agreements and disagreements and to see if the degree of agreement is adequate to justify the drafting of an explanatory statement of reconciliation, which will not have the status of a confession of faith or a dogmatic definition, but can be the basis on which our Churches can take the steps necessary for our being united in a Common Eucharist.

We have given attention to some of the issues that need to be officially decided in such a statement of reconciliation. Its basic content would of course be the common Christological agreement; it should be made clear that this is not an innovation on either side, but an explanation of what has been held on both sides for centuries, as is attested by the liturgical and patristic documents. The common understanding of Christology is the fundamental basis for the life, orthodoxy and unity of the Church.

Such a Statement of Reconciliation could make use of the theology of St Cyril of Alexandria as well as expressions used in the Formula of Concord of 433 between St Cyril and John of Antioch, the terminology used in the four later Councils and in the patristic and liturgical texts on both sides. Such terminology should not be used in an ambiguous way to cover up real disagreement, but should help to make manifest the agreement that really exists.

Some Practical Steps

9. Contacts among Churches of the two families have developed at a pace that is encouraging. Visits to each other, in some cases at the level of heads of Churches, and in others at episcopal level or at the level of theologians have helped to mark further progress in the growing degree of mutual trust, understanding and agreement. Theological students from the Oriental Orthodox Churches have been studying in institutions of the Eastern Orthodox Churches for some time now; special efforts should be made now to encourage more students from the Eastern Orthodox Churches to study in Oriental Orthodox

institutions. There should be more exchange at the level of theological professors and church dignitaries.

It is our hope and prayer that more official action on the part of the two families of Churches will make the continuation of this series of unofficial conversations no longer necessary. But much work still needs to be done, some of which can be initiated at an informal level.

10. With this in mind this third unofficial meeting of theologians from the two families constitutes:

(a) a Continuation Committee of which all the participants of the three conversations at Aarhus, Bristol and Geneva would be corresponding members; and

(b) a Special Executive Committee of this Continuation Committee consisting of the following members, and who shall have the functions detailed further below:

1. Metropolitan Emilianos of Calabria
2. Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy
3. Vardapet Mesrob Krikorian
4. Professor Nikos Nissiotis
5. Father Paul Verghese

Functions:

(a) To edit, publish and transmit to the Churches a report of this third series of conversations, through the "Greek Orthodox Theological Review";

(b) To produce, on the basis of a common statement of which the substance is agreed upon in this meeting, a resumé of the main points of the three unofficial conversations in a form which can be discussed, studied and acted upon by the different autocephalous Churches;

(c) To publish a handbook containing statistical, historical, theological and other information regarding the various autocephalous Churches;

(d) To explore the possibility of constituting an association of Theological Schools, in which all the seminaries, academies and theological faculties of the various autocephalous Churches of both families can be members;

(e) To publish a periodical which will continue to provide information about the autocephalous Churches and to pursue further discussion of theological, historical and ecclesiological issues;

(f) To make available to the Churches the original sources for an informed and accurate study of the historical developments in the common theology and spirituality as well as the mutual relations of our Churches;

(g) To sponsor or encourage theological consultations on local, regional or world levels, with a view to deepening our own understanding

of, and approach to, contemporary problems especially in relation to our participation in the ecumenical movement;

(h) To explore the possibilities of and to carry out the preliminary steps for the establishment of one or more common research centres where theological and historical studies in relation to the universal orthodox tradition can be further developed;

(i) To explore the possibility of producing materials on a common basis for the instruction of our believers including children and youth and also theological text-books.

From Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology, WCC Geneva 1981, p.8-13

Fourth Unofficial Consultation Summary of Conclusions

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22-23 January 1971

The following conclusions and questions have arisen out of our informal discussions in Addis Ababa about the lifting of anathemas and the recognition of Saints:

1. We agree that the lifting of the anathemas pronounced by one side against those regarded as saints and teachers by the other side seems to be an indispensable step on the way to unity between our two traditions.

2. We are also agreed that the lifting of the anathemas would be with a view to restoring communion between our two traditions, and therefore that it presupposes essential unity in the faith between our two traditions. The official announcement by both sides that there is in fact such essential unity in faith, a basis for which is already provided by the reports of our earlier conversations at Aarhus, Bristol and Geneva, would thus appear to be essential for the lifting of anathemas.

3. We agree further that once the anathemas against certain persons cease to be effective, there is no need to require their recognition as saints by those who previously anathematized them. Different autocephalous churches have differing liturgical calendars and lists of Saints. There is no need to impose uniformity in this matter. The place of these persons in the future united Church can be discussed and decided after the union.

4. Should there be a formal declaration or ceremony in which the anathemas are lifted? Many of us felt that it is much simpler gradually to drop these anathemas in a quiet way as some churches have already begun to do. Each Church should choose the way most suited to its situation. The fact that these anathemas have been lifted can then be formally announced at the time of union.

5. Who has the authority to lift these anathemas? We are agreed that the Church has been given authority by her Lord both to bind and to loose. The Church which imposed the anathemas for pastoral or other reasons of that time, has also the power to lift them for the same pastoral or other reasons of our time. This is part

of the Stewardship or Oikonomia of the Church.

6. Does the lifting of an Anathema imposed by an ecumenical council call in question the infallibility of the Church? Are we by such actions implying that a Council was essentially mistaken and therefore fallible? What are the specific limits within which the infallibility of the Church with her divine-human nature operates? We are agreed that the lifting of the anathemas is fully within the authority of the Church and does not compromise her infallibility in essential matters of the faith.

There was some question as to whether only another ecumenical council could lift the anathema imposed by an ecumenical council. There was general agreement that a Council is but one of the principal elements expressing the authority of the Church, and that the Church has always the authority to clarify the decisions of a Council, in accordance with its true intention. No decision of a Council can be separated from the total tradition of the Church. Each council brings forth or emphasizes some special aspect of the one Truth, and should therefore be seen as stages on the way to a fuller articulation of the truth. The dogmatic definitions of each council are to be understood and made more explicit in terms of subsequent conciliar decisions and definitions.

7. The lifting of anathemas should be prepared for by careful study of the teaching of these men, the accusations levelled against them, the circumstances under which they were anathematized, and the true intention of their teaching. Such study should be sympathetic and motivated by the desire to understand and therefore to overlook minor errors. An accurate and complete list of the persons on both sides to be so studied should also be prepared. The study should also make a survey of how anathemas have been lifted in the past. It would appear that in many instances in the past anathemas have been lifted without any formal action beyond the mere reception of each other by the estranged parties on the basis of their common faith. Such a study would bring out the variety of ways in which

anathemas were imposed and lifted.

8. There has also to be a process of education in the Churches both before and after the lifting of the anathemas, especially where anathemas and condemnations are written into the liturgical texts and hymnody of the Church. The worshipping people have to be prepared to accept the revised texts and hymns purged of the condemnations. Each Church should make use of its ecclesiastical journals and other media for the pastoral preparation of the people.

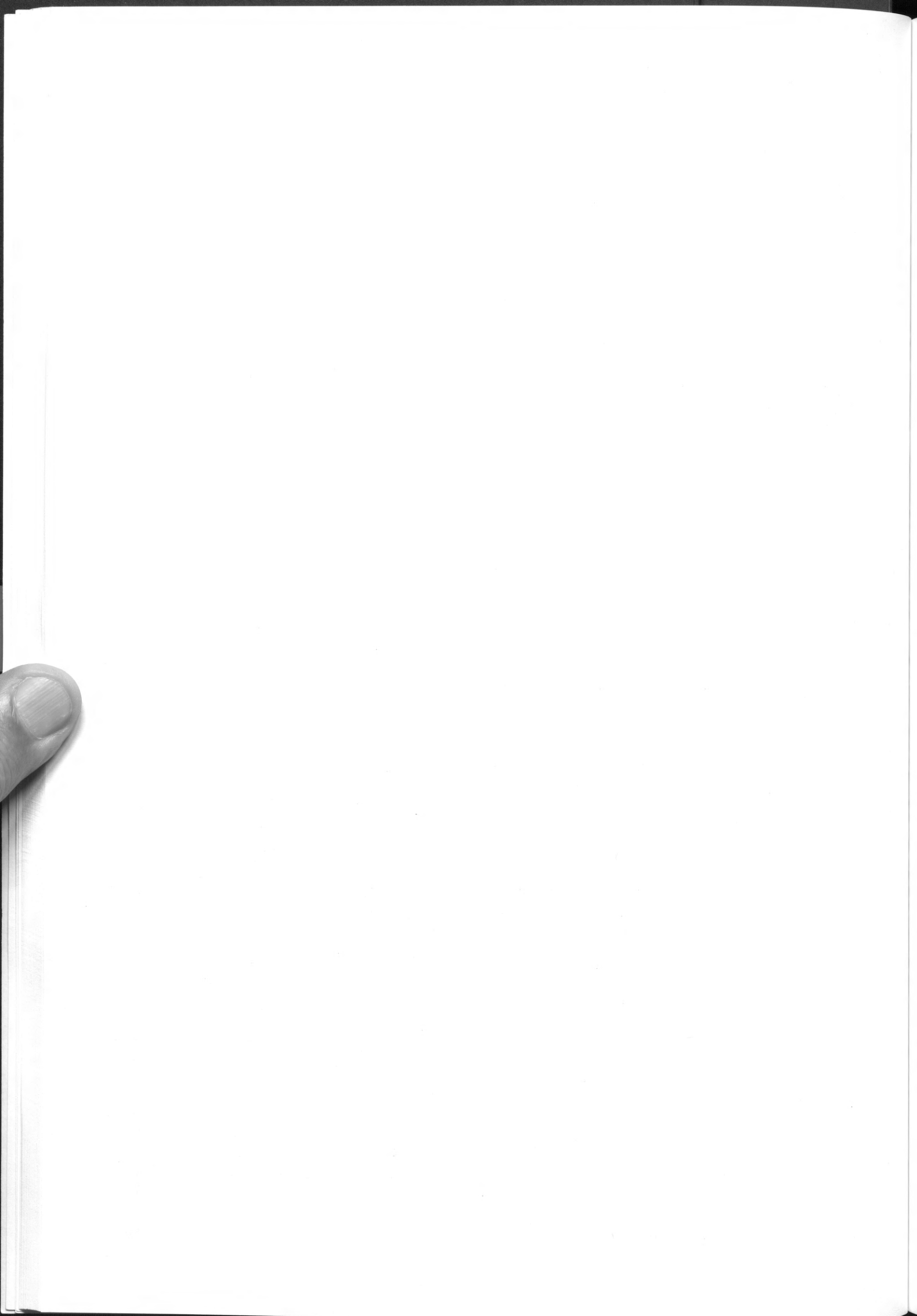
9. Another important element of such education is the rewriting of Church history, textbooks, theological manuals and catechetical materials. Especially in Church history, there has been a temptation on both sides to interpret the sources on a partisan basis. Common study of the sources with fresh objectivity and an eirenic attitude can produce common texts for use in both our families. Since this is a difficult and time-consuming project, we need not await its completion for the lifting of anathemas or even for the restoration of Communion.

10. The editing of liturgical texts and hymns to eliminate the condemnations is but part of the task of liturgical renewal. We need also to make use of the infinite variety and richness of our liturgical traditions, so that each Church can be enriched by the heritage of others.

11. There seems to exist some need for a deeper study of the question: "Who is a Saint?" Neither the criteria for sainthood nor the processes for declaring a person as a Saint are the same in the Eastern and Western traditions. A study of the distinctions between universal, national and local saints, as well as of the processes by which they came to be acknowledged as such, could be undertaken by Church historians and theologians. The lifting of anathemas need not await the results of such a study, but may merely provide the occasion for a necessary clarification of the tradition in relation to the concept of sainthood.

12. Perhaps we should conclude this Statement with the observation that this is now the fourth of these unofficial Conversations in a period of seven years. It is our hope that the work done at an informal level can soon be taken up officially by the Churches, so that the work of the Spirit in bringing us together can now find full ecclesiastical response. In that hope we submit this fourth report to the Churches.

From Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology, WCC Geneva 1981, pp.14-16





Above: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (centre) greets Pope Shenouda, while Patriarch Parthenios of Alexandria looks on. (*Cairo 1993: Ecumenical Patriarchate*)

Below: The members of the plenary session of the Joint Commission meet in St Bishoy monastery in Egypt (1989: *Chaillot*).

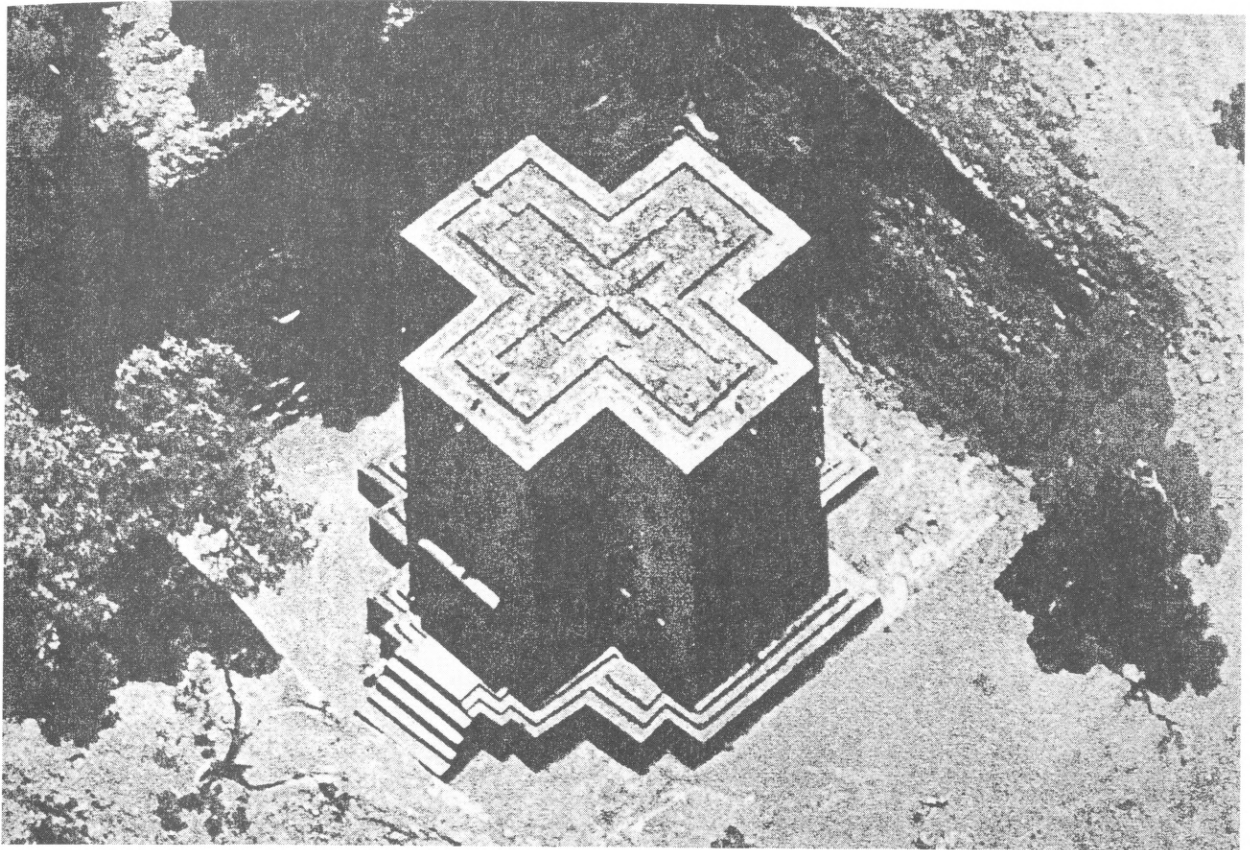




Above: Coptic Orthodox monastery of St. Anthony, by the Red Sea in Egypt (*Christine Chaillot*)

Below: Coptic monk with children (*Christine Chaillot*)

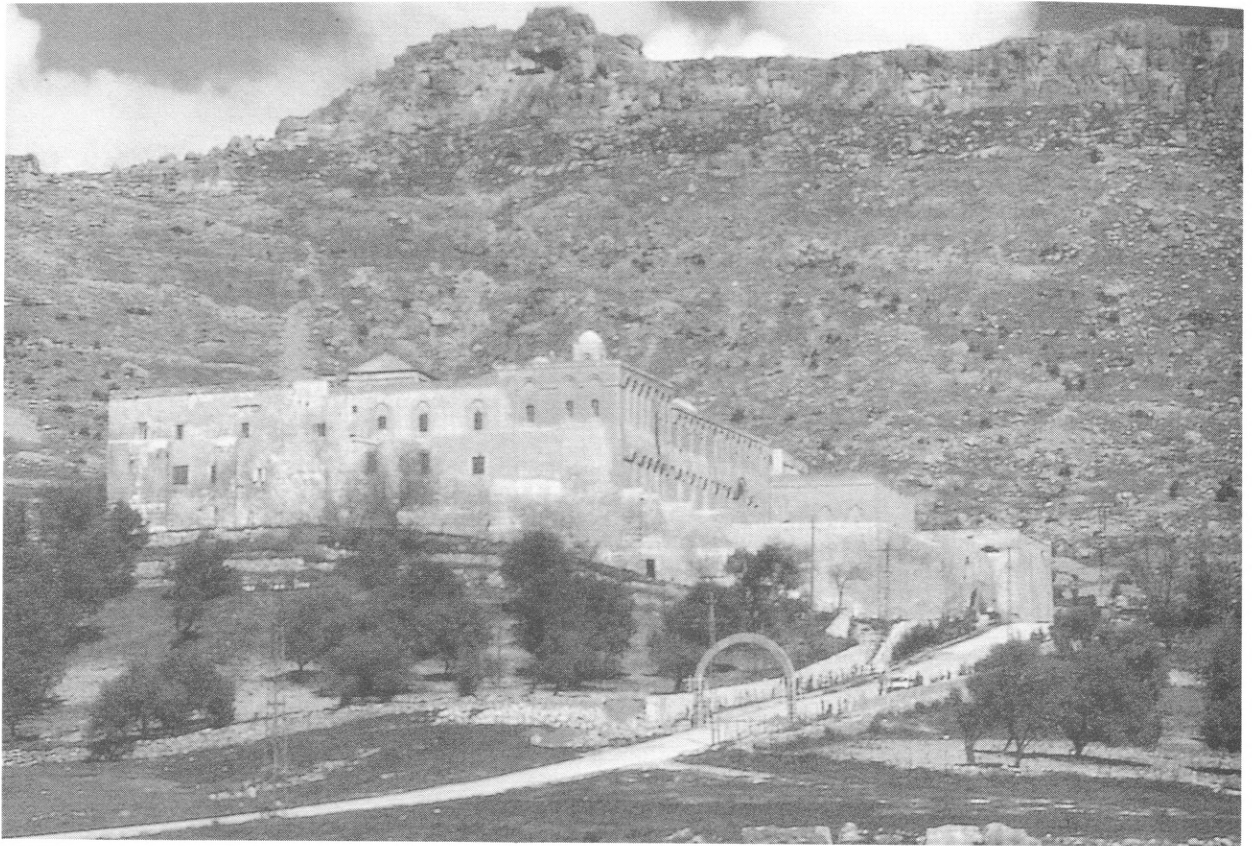




Above: Rock-hewn church in Lalibela, Ethiopia

Below: Traditional *debteras* (teachers) of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church





Above: Syrian Orthodox Monastery of Deir Zafaran (Turkey). Seat of the Patriarchate until 1923

Below: Easter in a Syrian Orthodox community in Switzerland (*Christine Chaillot*)





Above: Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church where St. Gregorios is buried in Parumala, India
(Christine Chaillot)

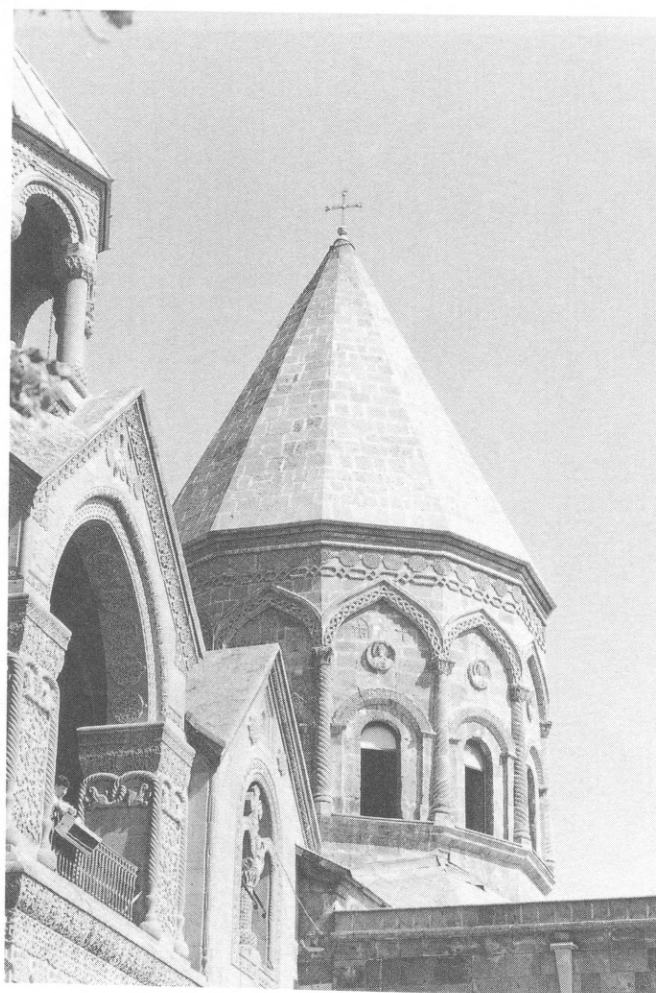
Below: Indian Orthodox woman takes oil for anointing from a traditional church lamp
(Christine Chaillot)





Above: The two Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholicos Karekin I (left) and Catholicos Aram I (right) during the latter's inthronisation in Antelias, Lebanon, in 1995

Below: The dome of the Cathedral at Etchmiadzin, Armenia (*Torossian*)





Above: Traditional Ethiopian iconography (17th c.)

Below: Coptic Orthodox icon from St Anthony's monastery, Egypt (*Christine Chaillot*)





Above: Ethiopian Orthodox youth movement in Aruca, Tobago

Below: St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Centre, in Nairobi, Kenya (*Christine Chaillot*)



Part IV

The Official Dialogue

Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

*Communiqué of the Joint Commission
Chambésy, Switzerland, 10-15 December 1985*

After two decades of unofficial theological consultations and meetings (1964-1985), moved forward by the reconciling grace of the Holy Spirit, we, the representatives of the two families of the Orthodox Tradition, were delegated by our Churches in their faithfulness to the Holy Trinity, and out of their concern for the unity of the Body of Jesus Christ to take up our theological dialogue at an official level.

We thank God, the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for granting us the fraternal spirit of love and understanding which dominated our meeting throughout.

The first part of our discussions centered on the appellation of the two families in our dialogue. Some discussion was also devoted to the four unofficial Consultations of Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Geneva (1970), and Addis Ababa (1971). It was thought that the studies and "agreed statements" of these unofficial consultations as well as the studies of our theologians could provide useful material for our official dialogue.

A concrete form of methodology to be followed in our dialogue was adopted by the Joint Commission. A Joint Subcommittee of six theologians was set up, three from each side, with the mandate to prepare common texts for our future work.

For the next meetings, whose aim would be to re-discover our common grounds in Christology and Ecclesiology, the following main theme and subsequent sub-themes were agreed upon:

"Towards a Common Christology"

- a) Problems of terminology
- b) Conciliar formulations
- c) Historical factors
- d) Interpretation of Christological dogmas today.

Special thanks were expressed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for convening this official dialogue, as well as for the services and facilities which were offered for our first meeting here in

Chambésy, Geneva, at the Orthodox Centre.

We hope that the faithful of our Churches will pray with us for the continuation and success of our work.

+ Prof. Dr. Chrysostomos (Konstandinidis)
Metropolitan of Myra
Ecumenical Patriarchate
Co-President of the Commission

+ Bishop Bishoy
Coptic Orthodox Church
Co-President of the Commission

Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

*(a) Communiqué of the Joint Commission
St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 20-24 June 1989*

The second meeting of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place at the St Bishoy Monastery in Wadi-El-Natroun, Egypt from 20-24 June, 1989.

The official representatives of the two families of Churches of the Orthodox Churches met in an atmosphere of warm cordiality and Christian brotherhood for four days at the guest house of the Patriarchal residence at the Monastery, and experienced the gracious hospitality and kindness of the Coptic Orthodox Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and his Church.

His Holiness Pope and Patriarch Shenouda addressed the opening session of the meeting and appealed to the participants to find a way to restore communion between the two families of Churches. The participants also travelled to Cairo to listen to the weekly address of Pope Shenouda to thousands of the faithful in the Great Cathedral of Cairo. Pope Shenouda also received the participants at his residence later.

The twenty three participants came from 13 different countries and represented 13 churches. The main item for consideration was the report of the Joint Subcommittee of six theologians on the problems of terminology and interpretation of Christological dogmas today. The meetings were co-chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan of Damaskinos of Switzerland and His Grace Bishop Bishoy of Damiette. In his response to Pope Shenouda Metropolitan Damaskinos appealed to the participants to overcome difficulties caused by differences of formulation. Words should serve and express the essence, which is our common search for restoration of full communion. "This division is an anomaly, a bleeding wound in the Body of Christ, a wound which according to His will that we humbly serve, must be healed".

A small drafting group composed of Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of New Delhi, Professor Vlassios Phidas, Prof. Fr John Romanides, Prof. Dimitroff, and Mr. Joseph Moris Faltas produced a brief statement of faith based on

the report of the Joint Subcommittee, in which the common Christological convictions of the two sides were expressed. This statement after certain modifications was adopted by the Joint Commission for transmission to our Churches, for their approval and as an expression for our common faith, on the way to restoration of full communion between the two families of Churches. The statement follows.

**(b) Agreed Statement of the Joint Commission
St Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, 20-24 June 1989**

We have inherited from our Fathers in Christ the one apostolic Faith and Tradition, though as Churches we have been separated from each other for centuries. As two families of Orthodox Churches long out of communion with each other we now pray and trust in God to restore that communion on the basis of the Apostolic faith of the undivided Church of the first centuries which we confess in our common Creed. What follows is a simple reverent statement of what we do believe, on our way to restore communion between our families of Orthodox Churches.

Throughout our discussions we have found our common ground in the formula of our common Father, St Cyril of Alexandria: *mia physis (hypostasis) tou Theou Logou sesarkomené*, and in his dictum that "it is sufficient for the confession of our true and irreproachable Faith to say and to confess that the Holy Virgin is *Theotokos* (Hom:15, cf. Ep. 39)".

Great indeed is the wonderful mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one True God, one *ousia* in three *hypostases* or three *prosopa*. Blessed be the Name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever.

Great indeed is also the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, for us and for all salvation.

The Logos, eternally consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit in His Divinity, has in these last days, become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Blessed Virgin Mary *Theotokos*, and thus become man, consubstantial with us in His humanity but without sin. He is true God and true Man at the same time, perfect in his Divinity, perfect in His humanity. Because the one she bore in her womb was at the same time fully God as well as fully human we call the Blessed Virgin *Theotokos*.

When we speak of the one composite (*synthetos*) *hypostasis* of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not say that in Him a divine *hypostasis* and a human *hypostasis* came together. It is that the one eternal *hypostasis* of the Second Person of the

Trinity has assumed our created human nature in the act uniting it with his own uncreated divine nature, to form an inseparably and unconfusedly united real divine-human being, the natures being distinguished from each other in contemplation (*theoria*) only.

The *hypostasis* of the Logos before the Incarnation, even with His divine nature, is of course not composite. The same *hypostasis*, as distinct from nature, of the Incarnate Logos, is not composite either. The unique theandric person (*prosopon*) of Jesus Christ is one eternal *hypostasis* who has assumed human nature by the Incarnation. So we call that *hypostasis* composite, on account of the natures which are united to form one composite unity. It is not the case that our Fathers used *physis* and *hypostasis* always interchangeably and confused the one with the other. The term *hypostasis* can be used to denote both the person as distinct from nature and also the person with the nature, for a *hypostasis* never in fact exists without a nature.

It is the same *hypostasis* of the Second Person of the Trinity, eternally begotten from the Father who in these last days became a human being and was born of the Blessed Virgin. This is the mystery of the hypostatic union we confess in humble adoration - the real union of the divine with the human, with all the properties and functions of the uncreated divine nature, including natural will and natural energy, inseparably and unconfusedly united with the created human nature with all its properties and functions, including natural will and natural energy. It is the Logos Incarnate who is the subject of all the willing and acting of Jesus Christ.

We agree in condemning the Nestorian and the Eutychian heresies. We neither separate nor divide the human nature in Christ from His divine nature, nor do we think that the former was absorbed in the latter and thus ceased to exist.

The four adverbs used to qualify the mystery of the hypostatic union belong to our common tradition - without commingling (or confusion)

(*asyngchytyos*), without change (*atreptos*), without separation (*achoristos*) and without division (*adiairetos*). Those among us who speak of two natures in Christ, do not thereby deny their inseparable, indivisible union; those among us who speak of one united divine-human nature in Christ, do not thereby deny the continuing dynamic presence in Christ of the divine and the human, without change, without confusion.

Our mutual agreement is not limited to Christology, but encompasses the whole faith of the one undivided Church of the early centuries. We are agreed also in our understanding of the Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father alone and is always adored with the Father and the Son.

The Joint Commission also appointed a Joint Subcommittee for Pastoral Problems between churches of the two families, composed of the following ten persons:

- Metropolitan Damaskinos. Co-President, Ex officio
- Bishop Bishoy. Co-President, Ex officio
- Prof. Vlassios Phidas. Co-Secretary, Ex officio
- Bishop Mesrob Krikorian. Co-Secretary, Ex officio
- Metropolitan George Khodr of Mt Liban
- Metropolitan Petros of Axum
- Prof. Gosevic. (Serbia)
- Prof. Dr. K. M. George (India)
- A Nominee of Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas of Syria
- Metropolitan Gregorios of Shoa.

This Joint Subcommittee will have its first meeting from 5-9 December in Anba Bishoy Monastery and will prepare a report for the next meeting of the Joint Commission.

It was also decided that the next meeting of the Joint Commission would be held in September 1990 at Chambésy, Geneva, to consider:

- a) The report of the Joint Subcommittee on Pastoral Problems.
- b) Conciliar formulations and anathemas. (Rev. Prof. John S. Romanides, H.E. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios).
- c) Historical factors. (Prof. Vlassios Phidas, Rev. Father Tadros Y. Malaty).
- d) Interpretation of Christological dogmas today. (Metropolitan Georges Khodr of Mount Liban, Bishop Mesrob Krikorian, and Mr Joseph Faltas).
- e) Future steps.

It was also decided that the name of the Joint Commission would be Joint Commission of the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

*(a) Introduction of the Joint Commission
Chambésy, Switzerland, 23-28 September 1990*

The third meeting of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Chambésy, Geneva, from 23-28 September 1990.

The official representatives of the two families of the Orthodox Churches and their advisers met in an atmosphere of prayerful waiting on the Holy Spirit and warm, cordial, Christian brotherly affection. We experienced the gracious and generous hospitality of His Holiness Patriarch Dimitrios I, through His Eminence, Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, in the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We were also received at two grand receptions, one at the residence of Metropolitan Damaskinos and the other at the residence of His Excellency, Mr. Kerkinos, the Ambassador of Greece to the United Nations, and Mrs. Kerkinos.

The 34 participants came from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, India, Lebanon, Poland, Switzerland, Syria, U.K., U.S.A., U.S.S.R. (Russian Church, Georgian Church and Armenian Church), and Yugoslavia. The six days of meetings were co-chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland and His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoi of Damiette. His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos in his inaugural address exhorted the participants to "work in a spirit of humility, brotherly love and mutual recognition" so that "the Lord of the Faith and Head of His Church" will guide us by the Holy Spirit on the speedier way towards unity and communion.

The meeting received two reports, one from its Theological Subcommittee, which met at the Orthodox Centre, Chambésy (20-22 September, 1990), and the other from its Subcommittee on Pastoral Relations, which met at the Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt (31 Jan. - 4 Feb. 1990). The following papers which had been presented to the Theological Subcommittee were distributed to

the participants:

1. Dogmatic Formulations and Anathemas by Local and Ecumenical Synods within their Social Context, by Revd. Prof. John S. Romanides, Church of Greece.

2. Anathemas and Conciliar Decisions — Two issues to be settled for Restoration of Communion among Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox Churches, by Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Delhi, Orthodox Syrian Church of the East

3. Historical Factors and the Council of Chalcedon, by Fr. T. Malaty, Coptic Orthodox Church.

4. Historical Factors and the Terminology of the Synod of Chalcedon (451), by Prof. Dr. Vlassios Phidas, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria.

5. Interpretation of Christological Dogmas Today, by Metropolitan George Khodr, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

6. Interpretation of Christological Dogmas Today, by Bishop Mesrob Krikorian, Armenian Apostolic Church of Etchmiadzin.

The six papers and the two Subcommittee reports, along with the "Summary of Conclusions" of the Fourth Unofficial Conversations at Addis Ababa (1971) which were appended to the report of the Theological Subcommittee, formed the basis of our intensive and friendly discussion on the issues and actions to be taken. A drafting committee composed of Metropolitan George Khodr, Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, Archbishop Keshishian, Archbishop Garima, Revd. Prof. John Romanides, Metropolitan Matta Mar Eustathius (Syria), Prof. Ivan Dimitrov (Bulgaria), with Prof. V. Phidas and Bishop Krikorian as co-secretaries, produced the draft for the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches. Another drafting Committee composed of Prof. Papavassiliou (Cyprus), Bishop Christoforos (Czechoslovakia), Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios and Liqa Seltanat Habta Mariam Warqineh (Ethiopia), with Fr. Dr. George

**(b) Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches
Chambésy, Switzerland, 23-28 September 1990**

The first Agreed Statement on Christology (Annex 1) adopted by the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, at our historic meeting at the Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, from 20 to 24 June 1989, forms the basis of this Second Agreed Statement on the following affirmations of our common faith and understanding, and recommendations on steps to be taken for the communion of our two families of Churches in Jesus Christ our Lord, who prayed "that they all may be one".

1. Both families agree in condemning the Eutychian heresy. Both families confess that the Logos, the Second Person of the Holy Spirit, only begotten of the Father before the ages and consubstantial with Him, was incarnate and was born from the Virgin Mary *Theotokos*; fully consubstantial with us, perfect Man with soul, body and mind (*nous*); He was crucified, died, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to the Heavenly Father, where He sits on the right hand of the Father as Lord of all Creation. At Pentecost, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, He manifested the Church as His Body. We look forward to His coming again in the fullness of His glory, according to the Scriptures.

2. Both families condemn the Nestorian heresy and the crypto-Nestorianism of Theodoret of Cyrillus. They agree that it is not sufficient merely to say that Christ is consubstantial both with His Father and with us, by nature God and by nature Man; it is necessary to affirm also that the Logos, Who is by nature God, became by nature Man, by His Incarnation in the fullness of time.

3. Both families agree that the *hypostasis* of the Logos became composite (*synthetos*) by uniting to His divine uncreated nature with its natural will and energy, which He has in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, created human nature, which He assumed at the Incarnation and made His own, with its natural will and energy.

4. Both families agree that the natures with

their proper energies and wills are united hypostatically and naturally without confusion, without change, without division and without separation, and that they are distinguished in thought alone (*te theoria mone*).

5. Both families agree that He who wills and acts is always the one *hypostasis* of the Logos incarnate.

6. Both families agree in rejecting interpretations of Councils which do not fully agree with the *Horos* of the Third Ecumenical Council and the letter (433) of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch.

7. The Orthodox agree that the Oriental Orthodox will continue to maintain their traditional Cyrillian terminology of "one nature of the Logos incarnate" ("*mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkomene*"), since they acknowledge the double consubstantiality of the Logos which Eutyches denied. The Orthodox also use this terminology. The Oriental Orthodox agree that the Orthodox are justified in their use of the two-natures formula, since they acknowledge that the distinction is "in thought alone" ("*te theoria mone*"). Cyril interpreted correctly this use in his letter to John of Antioch and his letters to Acacius of Melitene (PG 77, 184-201), to Eulogius (PG 77, 224-228) and to Succensus (PG 77, 228-245).

8. Both families accept the first three Ecumenical Councils, which form our common heritage. In relation to the four later Councils of the Orthodox Church, the Orthodox state that for them the above points 1-7 are the teachings also of the four later Councils of the Orthodox Church, while the Oriental Orthodox consider this statement of the Orthodox as their interpretation. With this understanding, the Oriental Orthodox respond to it positively.

In relation to the teaching of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox agree that the theology and practice of the veneration of icons taught by that Council are in basic agreement with the teaching and practice of the Oriental Orthodox from

ancient times, long before the convening of the Council, and that we have no disagreements in this regard.

9. In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology as well as of the above common affirmations, we have now clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion.

10. Both families agree that all the anathemas and condemnations of the past which now divide us should be lifted by the Churches in order that the last obstacle to the full unity and communion of our two families can be removed by the grace and power of God. Both families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations will be consummated on the basis that the Councils and Fathers previously anathematized or condemned are not heretical.

We therefore recommend to our Churches the following practical steps:

A. The Orthodox should lift all anathemas and condemnations against all Oriental Orthodox Councils and Fathers whom they have anathematised or condemned in the past

B. The Oriental Orthodox should at the same time lift all anathemas and condemnations against all Orthodox Councils and Fathers, whom they have anathematised or condemned in the past

C. The manner in which the anathemas are to be lifted should be decided by the Churches individually.

Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Love, we submit this Agreed Statement and Recommendations to our venerable Churches for their consideration and action, praying that the same Spirit will lead us to that unity for which our Lord prayed and prays.

***(c) Recommendations on Pastoral Issues of the Joint Commission
Chambésy, Switzerland, 23-28 September 1990***

The Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, at its meeting at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in Chambésy, Geneva, from 23-28 September 1990, received a report from its Joint Pastoral Subcommittee which had met at the Anba Bishoy Monastery in Egypt from 31 January to 4 February, 1990. The report was the starting point for an extended discussion about four types of pastoral issues:

- I. Relations among our two families of Churches, and our preparation for unity.
- II. Relations of our Churches with other Christian Churches and our common participation in the Ecumenical Movement.
- III. Our common service to the world of suffering, need, injustice and conflicts.
- IV. Our cooperation in the propagation of our common faith and tradition.

I. Relations among our two families of Churches

1. We feel as a Joint Theological Commission that a period of intense preparation of our people to participate in the implementation of our recommendations and in the restoration of communion of our Churches is needed. To this end we propose the following practical procedure.
2. It is important to plan an exchange of visits by our heads of Churches and prelates, priests and lay people of each one of our two families of Churches to the other.
3. It is important to give further encouragement to exchange of theological professors and students among theological institutions of the two families, for periods varying from one week to several years.
4. In localities where Churches of the two families co-exist, the congregations should organize participation of one group of people - men, women, youth and children, including priests-, where possible from one congregation of one family to a congregation of the other, to attend

in the latter's Eucharistic worship on Sundays and feast days.

5. Publications

(a) We need to publish, in the various languages of our Churches, the key documents of this Joint Commission with explanatory notes, in small pamphlets to be sold at a reasonable price in all our congregations.

(b) It will be useful also to have brief pamphlets explaining in simple terms the meaning of the Christological terminology and interpreting the variety of terminology taken by various persons and groups in the course of history in the light of our agreed statement on Christology.

(c) We need a book which gives some brief account, both historical and descriptive, of all the Churches of our two families. This should also be produced in the various languages of our peoples, with pictures and photographs as much as possible.

(d) We need to promote brief books of Church History by specialist authors giving a more positive understanding of the divergencies of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries.

6. Churches of both families should agree that they will not rebaptize members of each other, for recognition of the baptism of the Churches of our two families, if they have not already done so.

7. Churches should initiate bilateral negotiations for facilitating each other in using each other's church premises in special cases where any of them is deprived of such means.

8. Where conflicts arise between Churches of our two families, e.g. a) marriages consecrated in one Church being annulled by a bishop of another Church; b) marriages between members of our two families, being celebrated in one Church over against the other; c) or children from such marriages being forced to join the one Church against the other, the Churches involved should come to bilateral agreements on the procedure to be adopted until such problems are finally solved by our union.

9. The Churches of both families should be

encouraged to look into the theological curriculum and books used in their institutions and make necessary additions and changes in them with the view to promoting better understanding of the other family of Churches. They may also profitably devise programs for instructing the pastors and people in our congregations on the issues related to the union of the two families.

II. Relations of our Churches with other Christian Churches in the world

10. Our common participation in the Ecumenical Movement and our involvement in the World Council of Churches needs better co-ordination to make it more effective and fruitful for the promotion of the Faith, which was once delivered to the saints, in the context of the Ecumenical Movement. We could have a preliminary discussion of this question at the Seventh Assembly of the WCC at Canberra, Australia, in February 1991, as well as in regional and national councils of Churches and work out an appropriate scheme for more effective co-ordination of our efforts.

11. There are crucial issues in which our two families agree fundamentally and have disagreements with the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. We could organize small joint consultations on issues like:

- (a) the position and role of the woman in the life of the Church and our common Orthodox response to the contemporary problem of other Christian communities concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood,
- (b) pastoral care for mixed marriages between Orthodox and heterodox Christians,
- (c) marriages between Orthodox Christians and members of other religions,
- (d) the Orthodox position on dissolution or annulment of marriage, divorce and separation of married couples,
- (e) abortion.

12. A joint consultation should be held on the burning problem of proselytism, vis-a-vis religious freedom, to draw up the framework of an agreement with other Churches, for the procedure to be followed when an Orthodox or Oriental Orthodox person or family wants to join another (Catholic or Protestant) Church or vice-versa.

13. A special joint consultation should be held on the theology and practice of Uniatism in the Roman Catholic Church, as a prelude to a discussion with the Roman Catholic Church on this subject.

14. We need to have another joint consultation to co-ordinate the results of the several bilateral conversations now going on or held in the past by

Churches of our two families with other Catholic and Protestant Churches.

III. Our common service to the world of suffering, need, injustice and conflicts

15. We need to think together how best we could co-ordinate our existing schemes for promoting our humanitarian and philanthropic projects in the socio-ethnic context of our peoples and of the world at large. This would entail our common approach to such problems as:

- (a) hunger and poverty,
- (b) sickness and suffering,
- (c) political, religious and social discrimination,
- (d) refugees and victims of war,
- (e) youth, drugs and unemployment,
- (f) the mentally and physically handicapped,
- (g) the old and the aged.

IV. Our co-operation in the propagation of the Christian Faith

16. We need to encourage and promote mutual co-operation as far as possible in the work of our inner mission to our people, i.e., in instructing them in the Faith, and how to cope with modern dangers arising from contemporary secularism, including cults, ideologies, materialism, AIDS, homosexuality, the permissive society, consumerism, etc.

17. We also need to find a proper way for collaborating with each other and with other Christians in the Christian mission to the world without undermining the authority and integrity of the local Orthodox Churches.

Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

*Communiqué of the Joint Commission
Chambésy, Switzerland, 1-6 November 1993*

Following the mandate of their Churches, the Joint Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches held their fourth meeting at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Chambésy, Geneva, Switzerland between 1-6 November 1993 to consider the procedure for the restoration of full communion.

The official representatives of the two Orthodox families of Churches and their advisors met in an atmosphere of prayer and warm, Christian, cordial, brotherly love. They experienced the gracious and generous hospitality of His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomaios I, through His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, in the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The 30 participants came from Albania, Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, India, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, Syria, the United Kingdom and U.S.A.

The plenary meetings of the Joint Commission were co-chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland and His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette. His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos in his inaugural address explained the procedure which was to be followed and stressed that "The present Meeting of the Full Joint Theological Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is of the utmost importance not only for evaluating correctly the truly historic theological work of our Commission which has already been accomplished in our previous meetings, but also for facilitating the necessary ecclesiastical procedures for the restoration of full communion".

After the inaugural meeting, each side met separately to consider papers prepared on the following subjects:

- What is the competent ecclesiastical authority from each side for the lifting of the anathemas and what are the presuppositions for the restoration of ecclesiastical communion?

- Which anathemas of which synods and persons could be lifted in accordance with the proposal of paragraph 10 of the Second Common Statement?

- What is the canonical procedure from each side for the lifting of the anathemas and the restoration of ecclesiastical communion?

- How could we understand and implement the restoration of ecclesiastical communion in the life of our Church?

- What are the canonical and liturgical consequences of full communion?

They produced two Reports which were presented to the plenary meeting for clarifications and discussion on the third day of the proceedings. As a result of these discussions, the Oriental Orthodox presented a document of Response which opened the way for further discussions in the plenary. A drafting committee consisting of H.E. Metropolitan Bishoy of Damiette, H.E. Metropolitan Gregorios Yohana Ibrahim of Aleppo, H.E. Archbishop Mesrob Krikorian from the Oriental Orthodox side and Professors Fr John Romanides, Fr George Dragas and Vlassios Phidas from the Orthodox side were appointed to prepare appropriate Proposals to the two Church families on the lifting of anathemas from each side and restoring full communion among them.

The text of these proposals, unanimously agreed upon after discussion in plenary session, is as follows:

Proposals For Lifting Of Anathemas

In the light of our Agreed Statement on Christology at St Bishoy Monastery 1989 and our Second Agreed Statement at Chambésy 1990, the representatives of both Church families agree that the lifting of anathemas and condemnations of the past can be consummated on the basis of their common acknowledgement of the fact that the Councils and Fathers previously anathematized or condemned are Orthodox in their teachings. In the light of our four unofficial consultations (1964, 1967, 1970, 1971) and our three official meetings

which followed on (1985, 1989, 1990), we have understood that both families have loyally maintained the authentic Orthodox Christological doctrine, and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways.

2. The lifting of anathemas should be made unanimously and simultaneously by the Heads of all the Churches of both sides, through the signing of an appropriate ecclesiastical Act, the content of which will include acknowledgement from each side that the other one is Orthodox in all respects.

3. The lifting of anathemas should imply:

- a. that restoration of full communion for both sides is to be immediately implemented;
- b. that no past condemnation, synodical or personal, against each other is applicable any more;
- c. that a catalogue of Diptychs of the Heads of the Churches should be agreed upon to be used liturgically.

4. At the same time the following practical steps should be taken:

a. The Joint Subcommission for Pastoral issues should continue its very important task according to what had been agreed at the 1990 meeting of the Joint Commission.

b. The Co-Chairmen of the Joint Committee should visit the Heads of the Churches with the view to offering fuller information on the outcome of the dialogue.

c. A Liturgical Subcommittee should be appointed by both sides to examine the liturgical implications arising from the restoration of communion and to propose appropriate forms of concelebration.

d. Matters relating to ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be left to be arranged by the respective authorities of the local Churches according to common canonical and synodical principles.

e. The two Co-Chairmen of the Joint Commission with the two Secretaries of the Dialogue should make provisions for the production of appropriate literature explaining our common understanding of the Orthodox faith which has led us to overcome the divisions of the past, and also coordinating the work of other Subcommittees.

Part V

Oriental Orthodox Christology
Extracts of Liturgical and Other Texts

Prayers and Anaphoras of the Coptic Orthodox Church

My Lord, Jesus Christ, Begotten of the Father before all ages, who took flesh from the Virgin Mary and was born on earth in Bethlehem of Judea, who saved us from our sins. He who gives light to everyone brought into the world, illumine our hearts, and grant us the blessing of Thy Virgin birth.

(Prayers of Incense; Blessing for dismissal at Christmas and Epiphany, p.109)

Amen, amen, amen. I believe, I believe. I believe and confess to the last breath that this is the Life-giving Flesh, that of the Only-begotten Son, our Lord and our God, our Saviour Jesus Christ He took it from our Lady and Queen, the Mother of God, the pure and holy Saint Mary, and made it one with His Divinity without mingling and without confusion and without alteration. He confessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, and by His own will He gave Himself up on the cross to redeem us. In truth, I believe that His Divinity was never separated from His Humanity for one moment nor for a wink of the eye. This is given for our redemption, forgiveness, and eternal life for those who partake from it. I believe, I believe, I believe that this is the truth. Amen.
(Saint Basil's Anaphora, p. 111)

Blessed art Thou, O Son of God. Blessed art Thou Jesus Christ, and Thy Mother the Virgin saint Mary, the beautiful dove. Mary, the Mother of God (*Theotokos*). Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ
(Saint Basil's Anaphora, Hymn after the Prayer of reconciliation, p. 110)

O True God, our Lord, He who created us, sustained us, and put us in Paradise. And once we were tricked by the serpent and broke Thy commandment, we fell from eternal life, and were sent out of Paradise. Yet Thou didst not leave us to perish, but always sent us Thy prophets, and at the end of the days through Thine only Begotten Son, our Lord God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, Thou appeared to us; we who were in darkness and in

the shadow of death. For He who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, became man and taught the way of salvation.

(Saint Basil's Anaphora, Prayer of blessings, p. 110)

... To save us, Thou didst not trust an Angel, or Archangel, or Prophet; but lowered Thyself unto us and took the shape of man to be like us except in sin; and became our mediator with the Father.
(The Gregorian Anaphora, Prayer of Reconciliation, p.112)

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, the Almighty and Saviour of Thy people, O Wise Word of God, and Visible Man, Thou who because of Thy inconceivable Incarnation hast prepared for us a Heavenly bread, Thy Holy Body, mysterious and blessed in every way.

(The Gregorian Anaphora, Prayer of Fraction, p. 112)

From H.Amin, "The Orthodox faith in the Liturgies and Prayers of the Coptic Church", in Does Chalcedon divide or unite?, WCC, Geneva, 1981, p. 107-120

Anaphoras of the Syrian Orthodox Church

I will exalt You, O my Lord, the King, the Only-Begotten Son and the Word of the Heavenly Father, Who, by Your nature, are immortal. You accepted, by Your grace, and came down for the life and salvation of mankind, and did become incarnate of the holy, glorious and pure Virgin, Mother of God, Mary. Who without change did become a man and was crucified for us. O Christ our God, Who by Your death trampled our death and destroyed it. You Who are One of the Holy Trinity, and are worshipped and glorified in unity with Your Father and Your Holy Spirit, have compassion on us all.

(Order of the Liturgy, Antiphon, by Mar Severus Patriarch of Antioch p.36)

Glory be to the Bread of Life Who came down from Heaven, and became visible from the Daughter of David; Who was broken on Golgotha, was distributed in the Holy Church and given to the faithful people and is able to delight the living and the dead...

(Order of the Liturgy, Proemion, by Mar Severus Patriarch of Antioch p.44)

Thus truly the Word of God did suffer in flesh, and was sacrificed and broken on the Cross, and His soul separated from His Body, while His Godhead never separated neither from His Soul nor from His Body...

(Saint James's Anaphora, Prayer of Breaking and Signing of the Holy Mysteries by Bar Salibi (12th c.), p.126)

And according to Your pleasure, O Father, and by His willing determination, He accepted upon Himself the dispensation for our sake. He took flesh from the Holy Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, who was sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that, when He was conceived and born, He became everything like us, body, soul and mind and completely united with Adam, who

fulfilling His dispensation, made for us the beginning of the ascent into Heaven.

(Anaphora of Saint Severus of Antioch, p.414)

Extracts from: Anaphoras. The Book of the Divine Liturgies according to the Rite of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, published by Metropolitan A.Y. Samuel, Lodi (USA), 1991.

The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church

(Extracts)

Through the passion of thy holy Only-begotten all creation has been renewed and man has again been made immortal apparelled in raiment indispoilable

(The Hymn of Vesting, p.23)

The first-born Son, being of the same generation as Thou art and of the same essence of the Father, obeyed Thee also with oneness of will, as He did His Father. He, being in our likeness, announced Thee as very God, equal and consubstantial with his mighty Father.

(The Prayer to the Holy Spirit of Gregory of Narek, p.33)

The holy Church confesses the spotless Virgin Mary as being the God-bearer, for through her was given unto us the bread of immortality and the cup of rejoicing.

(Hymn of the Church, p.43)

O Only-begotten Son and Word of God, Who being Immortal, yet didst deign for our salvation to be incarnate through our most holy Lady and Ever-Virgin Mary, and without change didst become Man and wast crucified, by death trampling upon death, do Thou, Christ our God, save us, Thou, Who art One in the Holy Trinity and art glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

(The Monogenis, p.45)

Unto the king of glory, Christ, who was for us incarnate of the holy Virgin and endured even the Cross (...) unto him who suffered the burial of three days and rose again from the dead with power (...) unto him who mightily destroyed the gates of hell and endued his Church with majesty, let us with one accord sing praises.

(Midday Chant, Tone 1, p.47)

Yet through thine immeasurable goodness, thou, infinite Word of the Father, didst become man and didst appear as our high-priest

(Prayer of the Great Entrance, p.65)

It is verily proper and right with most earnest diligence always to adore and glorify thee, Father almighty, who didst remove the hindrance of the curse by thine imponderable Word... who wast pleased to dwell amongst us in a ponderable nature, according to the dispensation through the Virgin... For he, before whom the companies of vigilant angels could not bear to stand, being amazed at the resplendent and unapproachable light of his divinity, even he, becoming man for our salvation, granted unto us that we should join the Heavenly ones in spiritual choirs.

(The Preface, p.73)

And at the end of these days, tearing up the sentence of condemnation for all our debts, thou didst give us thine only-begotten Son... For having become man truly, and having become incarnate, through union without confusion, through the Mother of God, the Holy Virgin Mary, he journeyed through all the passions of our human life without sin and came willingly to the world-saving Cross, which was the occasion of our redemption.

(The Remembrance, p.75)

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the Only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth"
(Reading of John 1:1-14 at the end of each liturgy, p.109)

Extracts from: Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church (translation by Tiran Abp. Nersoyan), London, 1984

Anaphoras from the Divine Liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

I believe, I believe, I believe and I confess, unto my latest breath, that this [pointing] is the Body and Blood of our Lord and our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, which He took from the Lady of us all, the holy Mary of twofold virginity, and made it one with His Godhead without mixture or confusion, without division or alteration; and He verily confessed with a good testimony in the days of Pontius Pilate, and this Body He gave up for our sakes and for the life of us all.

(Priest's prayer in the Anaphora of the Apostles, p.82)

Thou didst send Thy Son to us. He came without being separated from Thee. He walked without being moved from Thee. He was with Thee with all His body, and Thou didst send Him to us without being separated from Thee. He is where Thou art. He was with His Father in Heaven while He was with His parents on earth. He descended without subtracting from above and without adding beneath. He was conceived in the womb yet the womb did not confine Him; He abode in the womb yet He was infinite; the Creator of all flesh lived in the womb. He who sitteth upon the cherubim abode in a daughter of flesh... He who formeth infants in the womb became an infant; they wrapped with cloths Him who was clothed in light... He walked as a man yet worked as God... He thirsted as a man who dieth, and changed the water into wine as being able to give life to all... He died to destroy death, He died to give life to the dead...

(Anaphora of John the Thunderer, p.114)

The Word came to thee without being separated from the bosom of His Father; thou didst conceive Him without His being limited, and He stayed in thy womb without making subtraction from above or addition beneath. There abode in thy womb the inestimable and unsearchable fire of the Godhead. It is not just to compare Him with earthly fire. Fire has measurement and volume but of the Deity it cannot be said that it is like this or even seems to be like this (...)

(Anaphora of Saint Mary, p.136)

The mind of man cannot reach Thy beginning and the speed of angels cannot find Thy end. Thou art invisible to the eyes of all, and Thou art heard by the ears of all... Of which shall I think and about which shall I marvel? Of Thy existence with Thy Father in silence and holiness? Or of Thy babyhood in the bosom of Thy mother like other babies?...

(Anaphora of Saint Athanasius, p.188)

He came without going out of His Father, He descended without removing from His position, He came without being separated from the Trinity, He came down without breaking His unity, and he dwelt in a daughter of flesh without leaving His throne... He was conceived in the womb without letting there be any place that was not full of Him, He was bound in the womb without making subtraction above, and was born without making addition beneath.

(Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom, p.252)

Again we beseech the Almighty and Redeemer from sin: remember that the body which Thou didst take from the holy Virgin is our body and not that which Thou didst bring down from Heaven. Remember that the body which Thou didst take from the holy Virgin is the body which stood before Pilate. Remember that the body which Thou didst take from the holy Virgin is the body which bore the tight bonds. Remember that the body which Thou didst take from the holy Virgin is the body which suffered and died. Remember that the body which Thou didst take from the holy Virgin is the body which rose from the dead on the third day. Remember that the body which Thou didst take from the holy Virgin is the body which ascended into Heaven in glory and sat at the right hand of the Father. Again the Lord our God will come in this body in the power of His divinity.

(Anaphora of the Three Hundred, p. 169)

Extracts from: The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church (14 anaphoras), translated by Rev. Marcos Daoud, Cairo, 1959.

The Epistle of Cyril of Alexandria to John of Antioch (433)

After the schism between the Alexandrians and Antiochians at the Council of Ephesus (431), efforts were made for reconciliation. At last reunion was attained through a dogmatic formula written by the Antiochian side, in which the Antiochians accepted the teaching of St Cyril of Alexandria. Expressing his great joy St Cyril answered with the following letter. In this historic reply, Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria agreed with Patriarch John of Antioch to end the schism and to restore communion between their two Churches.

To my Lord, beloved brother, and fellow-minister John, Cyril, greetings in the Lord.

"Let the Heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad," for "the middle-wall of the hedge" has been broken down and the distress has been made to cease and the cause of all dissension has been removed, Christ our common Saviour rewarding His Churches with peace, the most Orthodox and God-beloved Emperors, moreover, inviting us thereto, who, having become most excellent imitators of ancestral Orthodoxy, preserve the right faith sure and unshaken in their own souls: moreover, they make a special care of His holy Churches, that they themselves may have renowned glory for ever and render their empire most illustrious: to whom also the Lord of Hosts assigns blessings with a rich hand, and permits them to prevail over their antagonists and graces them with victory. For He might not speak falsely who said, "As I live, saith the Lord, them that honour Me I will honour."

When, then, my lord Paul, the brother and fellow-minister most dear to God, arrived at Alexandria, we were filled with joy - and very reasonably, seeing that such a man was acting as mediator, and had elected to encounter excessive toils in order to vanquish the envy of the devil and to heal divisions and, by the removal of the stumbling-blocks cast between us, to crown both our Churches and yours with unanimity and peace. It is needless to recount the ground of their

division: better is it, I take it, to think and speak rather of matters which befit a time of peace.

Delighted were we at our intercourse with that most pious man, who probably thought that he would have no little difficulty in persuading us that it was a duty to unite the Churches in peace and to stop the laughter of the heterodox and to blunt the sting of the devil's contumacy. But he found us so readily disposed for this that he had absolutely no trouble at all; for we remembered the words of the Saviour, "My peace I give to you, My peace I leave with you"; moreover, we have been taught to pray, "O Lord our God, give us peace, for Thou gavest us all things." So that if one becomes a participator in the peace which is abundantly supplied by God, he will not lack any good thing.

But that the dissension which arose between the Churches was quite needless and inexcusable we have now been fully convinced, since my lord the most God-beloved bishop Paul has proffered a paper which contained an unimpeachable confession of the faith, which he affirmed had been drawn up by thy Holiness and the most pious bishops in that place. The document is as follows, and it is inserted in this our letter word for word:

Now in the matter of how we think and speak concerning the Virgin Theotokos and the manner of the Incarnation of the Only-begotten Son of God, we must briefly state, not by way of supplement [to the Nicene Creed], but in the nature of full belief, as we have held from the first, having received it both from the divine Scriptures and from the tradition of the holy Fathers, making no addition at all to the Creed of the holy Fathers put forth at Nicaea. For, as we have just said, it suffices both for all knowledge of Orthodoxy and for the exclusion of all heretical blasphemy. And we will state it not daring impossibilities, but in the acknowledgement of our own infirmity, to exclude those who attack us on the ground that we are looking into things beyond the power of man.

We confess, then, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, Perfect God and Perfect Man of a rational soul and body; before the ages

begotten from the Father as to His Godhead, and in the last days the Self-same for us and for our salvation, (born) of Mary the Virgin as to his Manhood; the same co-essential with the Father as to Godhead and co-essential with us as to Manhood, for there was a Union of Two Natures, whereby we confess One Christ, One Son, One Lord. And according to this idea of the unconfused Union we confess the Holy Virgin to be the Theotokos, because that God the Word was incarnate, and lived as Man, and from the very conception united to Himself the temple which He took of her.

And with regard to the evangelic and apostolic sayings concerning the Lord, we know that theologians make some common, as relating to One Person, and distinguish others, as relating to Two Natures, interpreting the God-befitting ones of the Godhead of Christ, and the lowly ones of His Humanity.

On reading these holy words and finding that we ourselves also thus think - for "there is one Lord, One Faith, One Baptism" - we gave glory to God the Saviour of the world, and congratulated each other that both our Churches and yours hold a faith agreeing with the God-breathed Scriptures and with the tradition of the Holy Fathers. But then I learnt that certain of those who are wont to be censorious were buzzing around like fierce wasps, and were spitting out villainous words against me as though I said that the holy Body of Christ was brought down from Heaven and was not (taken) from the holy Virgin, I thought it necessary to add a few words on this topic in answer to them. O foolish ones, knowing only how to accuse falsely! How were ye thus mentally perverted so as to have fallen sick of such monstrous folly? For it is your absolute duty clearly to understand that well-nigh the whole of our contest for the faith has been waged round our affirmation that the holy Virgin is *Theotokos*. But if we say that the holy Body of Christ our common Saviour is from Heaven and was not made from her, how could she be any longer understood to be *Theotokos*? For whom has she at all brought forth, if it is not true that she begat after the flesh Emmanuel? Let those, then, who have prated these things about me be ridiculed; for the blessed prophet Isaiah did not lie when he said, "Behold the Virgin shall be with Child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel"; and altogether truly did the holy Gabriel speak to the blessed Virgin, "Fear not Mary; for thou didst find favour with God; and behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a Son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins". But when we speak of our Lord Jesus Christ being "from Heaven" and from above, we

do not use these expressions as meaning that His Holy Flesh was brought from above and from Heaven, but we follow rather the divinely speaking Paul, who plainly cried, "The first man is from earth, of mould: the Second Man is (the Lord) from Heaven". Moreover, we remember, too, the Saviour saying, "No one hath ascended into Heaven but He that came down from Heaven, the Son of Man"; although He was born according to the Flesh, as I have just said, of the holy Virgin. But since God the Word who came down from above and from Heaven "emptied Himself, taking servant's form" and was called "Son of Man", still remaining what He was, that is, God - for He is immutable and unalterable by Nature - He is therefore now conceived of as One with His own flesh, and is said to have come down from Heaven and is, moreover, named "Man from Heaven", being perfect in Godhead and perfect in Manhood, and conceived of as in One Person; for "there is One Lord Jesus Christ" although the difference of the Natures is not ignored, from both of which we say that the ineffable Union hath been wrought.

As for those who say there was a mixture or confusion or blending of God the Word with the flesh, let thy Holiness deem it well to stop their mouths; for it is likely that some are commonly reporting this also about me, as though I had either thought or said so. But I am so far from thinking such a thing that I deem those to be actually out of their mind who can for a moment suppose it possible for a shadow of turning to take place in respect of the Divine Nature of the Word; for He ever abides what He is and has not been changed, neither, indeed, could He ever be changed or be capable of variation. Besides, we all confess the Word of God to be naturally impassible, although in His all-wise administration of the mystery (of the Incarnation) He is seen to attribute to Himself the suffering which befell His own Flesh. Thus likewise, saith the all-wise Peter, "Christ Thou suffered for us in the Flesh," and not in the nature of the ineffable Godhead. For in order that He Himself may be believed to be the Saviour of the world, He takes upon Himself, as I said, the sufferings of His own flesh in accordance with the appropriation inherent in the Incarnation; much as He was foreannounced by the prophet's voice as of Him, "I gave My back to the scourges. My cheeks to blow, and My face I turned not away from the shame of spitting."

Now that we follow in all respects the opinions of the Holy Fathers, but especially those of our blessed and all-renowned Father Athanasius, refusing to be carried in the very least beyond them, let Thy Holiness be persuaded and let no one else feel any doubt. I would also have set down many passages of theirs, guaranteeing my own

words from theirs, had not I feared the length of the letter lest it should thereby become tedious.

And we do not suffer the faith to be in any way shaken by anyone, which was defined - I mean the Symbol of the Faith - by our holy Fathers who assembled in their time at Nicaea: nor do we permit either ourselves or others either to alter a word of what is there laid up, or to transgress a single syllable; remembering Him who said, "Remove not the eternal bounds which thy Fathers set." For they themselves were not the speakers, but the Spirit of God even of the Father, who proceedeth indeed from Him, yet is not alien from the Son, at least in respect of substance. Indeed, the words of the holy teachers guarantee this to us. For in the Acts of the Apostles it is written, "When they came opposite Mysia they attempted to go into Bithyria, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not". The divinely uttering Paul also writes, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God, but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if anyone have not the Spirit of Christ he is not His". But when any of those who are wont to pervert the right turn aside my words to what they please, let not thy Holiness marvel, being aware that those also of every heresy find the starting-points for their own error out of the God-breathed Scriptures, corrupting by their own evil notions what has been rightly written by the Holy Spirit, and pouring over their own heads the unquenchable flame.

But since we have learnt that certain persons have corrupted the epistle of our all-renowned Father Athanasius to the blessed Epictetus, which is Orthodox and have published it so that thereby many are injured, we have therefore, in our thought of something useful and necessary for the brethren, sent duplicates to thy Holiness made from ancient copies which are here with us, and which are free from error.

The Lord shall keep thee in good health and praying for us, most honoured brother.

From: T.H. Bindley, The Ecumenical Documents of the Faith, London, 1950

Severus of Antioch on Christology

(Extracts)

The One who is conceived, that is the One whom I spoke about before by announcing: *Hail to you, full of grace, the Lord is with you*. This Lord is the Word of God, one of the three hypostases, the strength of the Father, the Very High, who will cover [you]. Christ indeed is the strength and the wisdom of God, the one who, on one side, has no beginning and who is begotten eternally and not bodily as Word of the Father. From you [Mary], on the other side, He was incarnate without change, in an incomprehensible way and without confusion. But He is consubstantial with you, this body which will be conceived and born, which is animated by a reasoning and intellectual soul, and which wants to operate the salvation of the whole human kind and not only one part.

Homily 2, translation from Patrologie Orientale, 38, p.[43] / 287

The One who at the beginning had made man from earth, has been made a little child from the Virgin, taking flesh by the Holy Spirit and from her. His flesh is consubstantial with ours which is animated by a reasoning soul.

Homily 7, translation from Patrologie Orientale, 38, p.[73] / 317

So, from two natures, the divinity and the humanity, which He possesses in a perfect way according to their concept, we understand one [only] Christ, one [only] *prosopon*, one *hypostasis*, one nature incarnate of God the Word... Thus 'the Word who became Flesh' means that He became Man without change, while remaining God.

Homily 23, translation from Patrologie Orientale, 37, p.[117, 119]

This is why Christ is also one of two without division; and, because these [elements] from which [comes] this union do not blend, He also shows, without doubt, that the same is on one side from the same essence (*ousia*) as the Father according to the divinity [and] that the same is on

the other side as well from the same essence (*ousia*) as us people according to humanity. As when what He is remains what He is, then He became Man without change.

Homily 93, translated from Patrologie Orientale, 25, p.[489-90] / 45-46

Severus of Antioch on 'One Incarnate Nature of God the Word'

Rev. Prof. V.C. Samuel

Following Cyril of Alexandria, Severus accepts four phrases with reference to the Incarnation. They are: 'of (ek) two natures', 'hypostatic union', 'one incarnate Nature of God the Word', and 'one composite Nature'. In his view all these phrases stand together... The crucial word in these phrases is 'nature' (*physis* or *kyono* in Syriac). As to its meaning, both Severus and the Chalcedonian writers of his time agree that it may be taken either in the sense of *ousia* or in that of *hypostasis*. Severus shows that *ousia* stands for him both as an equivalent of the *eidos* of Plato and as a generic term including all the members of a class. By *hypostasis* (*hypostasis* or *qnomo*) Severus means a concrete particular in which the *ousia* (*ousia* or *ousio*) is individuated...

In a long passage in his 'Philalethes', Severus discusses the phrase 'one incarnate Nature of God the Word'. When the Fathers spoke of 'one incarnate Nature of God the Word', he writes, "they made it clear that the Word did not abandon His Nature"; neither did He undergo any "loss or diminution in His *hypostasis*". When they affirmed that 'He became incarnate' they made it clear that 'the flesh was nothing but flesh, and that it did not come into being by itself apart from the union with the Word'...

There are three emphases made by the phrase 'one incarnate nature'. (1) It was God the Son Himself who became incarnate. (2) In becoming incarnate, He individuated Manhood in union with Himself and made it His very own. (3) The incarnate Word is one Person.

The 'one' in the phrase 'one incarnate Nature' is not a simple one, so that the characterization 'monophysite' cannot be considered applicable to the position of Severus. As 'one incarnate nature', Jesus Christ is one composite nature. In the Incarnation, by a divine act of condescension, God the Son willed to be so united with Manhood that the two of them came together, without either of them being lost or diminished. At the same time, their union was so real and perfect that Christ was one composite nature'.

In the face of the misunderstanding expressed by the Chalcedonian tradition that the non-Chalcedonian position has ignored the Manhood of Christ, we shall put together the ideas emphasized by Severus on this point.

(1) Christ's Manhood was an individuated Manhood, fully like and continuous with our Manhood, with the single exception that it was absolutely sinless. (2) The Manhood of Christ was individuated only in a hypostatic union with God the Son, and it continued to exist in perfection and reality in that union. Therefore, the Manhood of Christ did not exist independent of its union with God the Son. (3) The union did not lead to a confusion of the Manhood with, or a loss in, the Godhead; and therefore in Christ there were Godhead and Manhood with their respective properties hypostatically united with each other. But the two should not be separated. (4) The Union brought into being one Person, and this One Person is the Person of God the Son in His incarnate state. There is a distinction between the pre-incarnate Son and the incarnate Son, so that the *hypostasis* and *prosopon* of Jesus Christ are not simply the *hypostasis* and *prosopon* of God the Son. (5) The Manhood of Christ was real, perfect, and dynamic in the union.

... It was the one incarnate Person who was the subject of all the words and deeds of Christ. This one incarnate Person was the 'one incarnate nature of God the Word' or the 'one composite nature' of the incarnate Son. When we reflect on Him, we can, in our contemplation, distinguish the two natures of Godhead and Manhood and their respective properties and operations.

Extracts from: Rev. Prof. V.C. Samuel, "Severus on 'One Incarnate Nature of God the Word' ", in Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?, p.86-9, WCC, 1981

Armenian Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali's Profession of Faith

(1165) (*Extracts*)

We confess the very Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, divided into three Persons, and united in one Nature and Divinity. The Father is unbegotten, without beginning, existing before Time; the Son, begotten from the nature of the Father, impassible, incorporeal, existing before Time; the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, not by generation, like the Son, but emanating like a stream from a spring; [the whole] in a manner intelligible to God alone, and incomprehensible to creatures.

(...)Secondly, one of the Three, the Word, the only-begotten Son of the Father, by the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit, announced by the Archangel Gabriel, descended into the womb of the Virgin Mary, without leaving the bosom of the Father. His divine uncircumscribed nature; taking to himself a part of the blood of the most pure Virgin, made of the mass of Adam, he united it with His Divinity by an inscrutable and ineffable blending. He then became of two perfect natures, divine and human, one perfect Person immutable and (essentially) indivisible; he never lost his properties, nor took the gross and complex human nature in exchange for the simple and incomplex divine nature; nor did the divine nature derogate from its eternal simplicity in blending the simple and incorporeal divine nature with the material nature of the body, although it is said of the indissoluble union that the incorporeal was made flesh and the Word was materialized. Thus, the immaterial Word blends with body and unites with Himself our human nature, and divinizes it by this blending and union, without producing any change or alteration in the union, such as takes place in the soul and body of man. Even the explanation of this example is unintelligible; for the truth is supreme over the example, as it is the analogy between the Creator and the Creature. In an inconceivable manner the Word unites our nature with His own in such a way that the divine and human natures remain unaltered, not like air and water contained in a vessel which is void after being emptied, but by nature He is united

incomprehensibly, with an indivisible and unconfused union. Christ took the nature of Adam, not that which he had while in impeccability in paradise, but the one which he received after sin and corruption. The Virgin Mary, from whom He took flesh, was of the peccable nature of Adam, and [that nature was] united with the divine nature of God, the peccable became impeccable, and the corruptible became exempt from the contemptible corruption of passions. As when minerals kindled by fire they are consumed if there is rust of corruption in them, but, their nature being cleansed of corruption remains unconsumed. His beginning was immaculate because His birth was from the Immaculate Virgin without pollution: His death, too, was without corruption, because His body while in the tomb did not have any corruption. Therefore, He must have been incorruptible during the period of time that elapsed between His birth and His death.

We do not say that He was free from corruption of necessary and voluntary passions, that is, hunger or thirst, sleep or fatigue, affliction or lamentation - which makes us understand the incorruption truly and not fantastically -: we confess He was free from the corruption of involuntary or contemptible passions (...)

We confess, therefore, Christ as God and Man, but we do not mean division by this, God forbid! because He Himself suffered and did not suffer; since by His Divine Nature He was immutable and impassible, but in His human body He suffered and died. Consequently, those who say that it was one who suffered and another who did not suffer, fall into error. Thus it was none other than the Word who suffered and embraced death in His body: because the same Word Himself who was impassible and incorporeal consented to become passible in order to save humanity by His Passion. For whatsoever the corporeal flesh of the Word suffered belonged to the body which joined with the Word and became extremely glorious. For it was He who suffered, and it was He who did not suffer. He suffered in His body because He was

tortured, but in His passion He did not feel suffering for He was inseparable from His passible body and as the Divine Word, in His nature, He was inaccessible to passion. But, the incorporeal had joined inseparably with the passible body which the Word took on Himself removing its weakness. This is what Athanasius said...

Moreover, the Greeks in their letter declare that the Armenians confess one Nature of the Incarnate Word, for which doctrine they say we rebuke Apollinarius. This would need a long explanation, but for the sake of brevity we shall try to satisfy you in a few words.

We say one Nature in Jesus Christ, neither confused as Eutyches taught, nor submerging of the humanity as Apollinarius said, but according to Cyril of Alexandria who in his Thesis against Nestorius states that 'one is the Nature of the Word incarnate, as the Fathers said'. Cyril means by 'Fathers', Athanasius and those who preceded him. We speak, therefore, according to the Tradition of the Fathers, and not according to the opinions of the heterodox, who in confessing one nature confuse, transmute, and change by several means the Incarnation of Christ. Instead of saying One Person in Christ, as you do and as it is professed by us, we say One Nature, which is not in conformity with heretical conceptions: the two are similar. When we speak of Christ we do not designate only one quality in Him but two: what we stated about His passion and death are also said by Athanasius, that God the Word becoming Incarnate was impassible by Nature, but the incorporeal was united indivisibly with the passible body. When we say one nature we mean the indivisible and the ineffable union of the Word with the flesh.

On the other hand, we comply with those who confess two natures not divided according to Nestorius and not confused according to the heterodox teachings of Eutyches and Apollinarius, but united inconfusedly and indivisibly. For example, man has body and soul; the two are of different natures, because one is Heavenly, the other earthly, one is visible, the other invisible, one is temporal, the other immortal, but after the union man is said to have one nature and not two. No confusion is thought of in saying that man has one nature. We do not think of man as only of soul or of flesh but as the union of the two. Thus the nature of Christ is said to be one, not confused, but two natures ineffably united with each other. If it were not so, then we should have to consider not only two natures in Christ but three, two human natures, that is soul and body, and one divine nature. But according to the writings of the Fathers, after the union the duality of divisions disappeared. Therefore, if "one

Nature" is said for the indissoluble and indivisible union and not for the confusion, and "two natures" is said as being inconfused, immutable, and indivisible, both are within the bounds of Orthodoxy. (...)

You have also written about us, that in saying one Nature of Christ we believe that His humanity is altogether absorbed in His divinity: as for example when a drop of vinegar or honey disappears after falling into the sea. This is absolutely contrary to the truth. Here is our answer.

We stated above that in the hypostatic union the human substantive and corporeal nature did not change into the incorporeal and pure nature of God and did not lose its bulk, nor did the pure and incorporeal nature of God, blending with the nature of flesh, change or alter from its eternal simplicity. Vinegar and honey, as water and wine, are corrupted when they are thrown into the sea. The mode of union of the divinity and humanity is not thus; for when vinegar and honey are mixed together they are corrupted because they are matter. But body and the incorporeal blend and unite ineffably; they do not alter and are not confused with each other, as the human soul and the body are not. Thus, if this is true for the created nature, how much more glorious should one understand the union of the Creator's nature with that of the creature to be.

From: ed. T. Poladian, The Profession of Faith of the Armenian Church by Saint Nerses Shnorhali, Boston, 1941

The Confession of the Ethiopian Emperor Claudius

(1555) (*Extracts*)

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

This is my faith, and the faith of my fathers, Kings of Israel; and the faith of my flock, which is within the fold, my kingdom.

We believe in one God: And in his only Son Jesus Christ, his Word and his Power, his Counsel and his Wisdom; Who was with Him before the world was created: And in the last days He came unto us, not laying aside the throne of his Godhead; And was made man of the Holy Ghost, and of Mary the Holy Virgin: And He was baptized in the River Jordan, in his thirtieth year; And He was perfect man: And He was crucified on the wood of the cross, in the days of Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried: And He rose again on the third day; and then on the fortieth day ascended with glory into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of His Father: And He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

From: H. Hyatt, The Church of Abyssinia, p.292, London, 1928; itself a translation from Ludolf, Historia Aethiopica, Vol.II, p.237, Frankfort, 1681

On the Issue of Monophysitism and Dyophysitism

*Statement of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
(1970) (Extracts)*

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church considers itself to belong to the One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ. It is holy because its Founder, Jesus Christ, is holy; it is catholic because the whole world is its province and because it is universal in time and place; it is apostolic because it was established on earth by the Apostles of Christ

The Ethiopian Church belongs to the group of Orthodox Churches wrongly termed "Monophysite" but which prefer the epithet "Non-Chalcedonian". The other members of this family are the Coptic, Armenian, Syrian and Indian Churches. Together with the Roman Catholic Church and the Byzantine Orthodox Church they comprised the One Church for four centuries until the division arose on account of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 which insisted that Christ had the two natures of humanity and divinity.

Dyophysites teach that, after the union, Christ retained the natures of divinity and humanity in His one Person in such a way that He ate food, slept, laughed, suffered, walked as Man in the human nature, but healed the sick and resuscitated Lazarus as God in the divine nature. Thus He is one Person in two natures of humanity and divinity. The wrongly called Monophysites reject the allegation that they teach one Nature and one Person in Christ. The teaching of the Ethiopian Church may thus be summarized:

1. The Ethiopian Church rejects Eutyches, who is believed to have taught that in Christ the human Nature was absorbed by the divine Nature. Nestorius also is excluded.

2. Dioscorus, whom the Council of Chalcedon deposed, is accepted. But it should be remembered that the Council of 451 did not believe that Dioscorus was a heretic. Dioscorus did not deny the continuance of Godhead and Manhood in the One Christ after their union and he agreed with the Council that the teaching which Eutyches was understood to hold was heretical.

3. The teaching of the Ethiopian Church is the Faith of the Fathers expounded by the great

theologians of the Alexandrine tradition, especially by St Cyril and his illustrious theological followers. Accordingly the Ethiopian Church maintains that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man, at once consubstantial with the Father and with us; the divinity and the humanity continuing in Him without mixture or separation, confusion or change. He is one and the same Person both in his eternal pre-existence and also in the economy, in which he performs the redeeming work of God on behalf of man, from the indivisible state of union of Godhead and Manhood.

4. The Church abides by the formula "The one Incarnate Nature of God the Word", on which St Cyril of Alexandria increasingly insisted, a formula which was accepted as correct by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D and which, after the Council of Chalcedon, the Chalcedonian side in the East itself admitted.

5. It is unfair for the Church to be nicknamed "monophysite" by the faithful who accept the Chalcedonian formula of "two natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ", because the expression used by the non-Chalcedonian side was always *mia physis*, and never *monophysis* (*mia* standing for a composite unity unlike *mone* standing for an elemental unity). Therefore these churches are best referred to as the non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches.

6. "Tewahedo" is the Ethiopian term (meaning "made one") which is the best expression conveying the Faith of the Church, since it emphasizes the inseparable unity of the Godhead and Manhood in the Person of Christ. The Church's official title is the "Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Bete Christian".

7. After the Union, Christ was no longer in two natures. The two natures became united into one nature without separation, without confusion and without change. Thus He was at the same time perfect God and perfect man. This is the union of the natures in the Incarnation. After the union Christ is not two persons or two natures, but one Person, one incarnate Nature of God the Son, with

one will, but being at once divine and human. If you separate the natures after the union and say that Christ is in two natures, you will be confronted with serious problems. You will have to admit, for instance, that Christ was crucified merely as a man and that therefore he did not redeem the world, for God alone is able to accomplish the world's redemption. In brief, it is held that Christ, in acting, acted as a united being, not separately as man or separately as God.

8. Proof that we believe in the continuance of divinity and humanity in the One Christ may be illustrated:

a) In the Communion we receive the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. These belong to man, humanity and we know that Jesus Christ is God, divinity.

b) The present Liturgy can be used as a criterion of the Church. There it is openly expressed that there is divinity and humanity in Christ.

c) The Chalcedonian formula was rejected because it was thought to destroy the one Person of Christ and there was no clear distinction between "nature" and "person". Person meant nature.

d) We believe the Nicæan Creed in which the divinity and humanity of Christ are set forth, and in the Creed of the liturgy we declare our belief in the co-equality of Jesus Christ with God the Father, and belief in his having grown like men, yet without sin or evil, and in his having taken flesh from Mary.

e) The confession of Faith by the Emperor Claudius declares that Jesus Christ was perfect man and perfect God. Monophysitism is rejected. It is a question of error in vocabulary, the concepts of Nature and Person not being clear and there being obscurity in philosophical terms such as *physis*, *hypostasis*, *ousia*, *prosopon*, *atreptos*, *mia*, *mono* etc. As to the two natures of Christ the Dyophysites and non-Chalcedonians are one, it is a matter of interpretation after the union of the two natures. Happily the Dyophysites are currently realizing the position.

From: The Ethiopian Church, Addis Ababa, pp.96-100, 1970

Part VI
Further Information

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In Cairo the association The Friends of Africa, has regular meetings, welcomes African guests and organizes trips to see the missionary work. For further information concerning Coptic mission contact:

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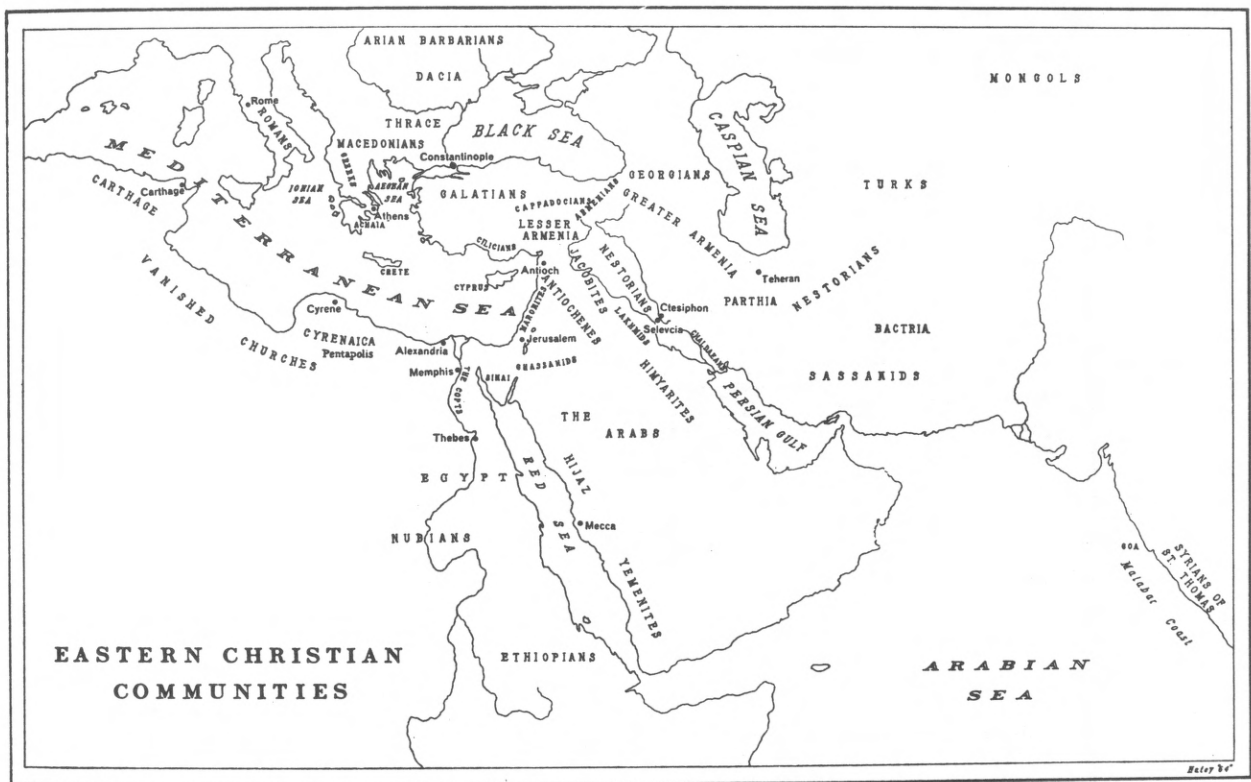
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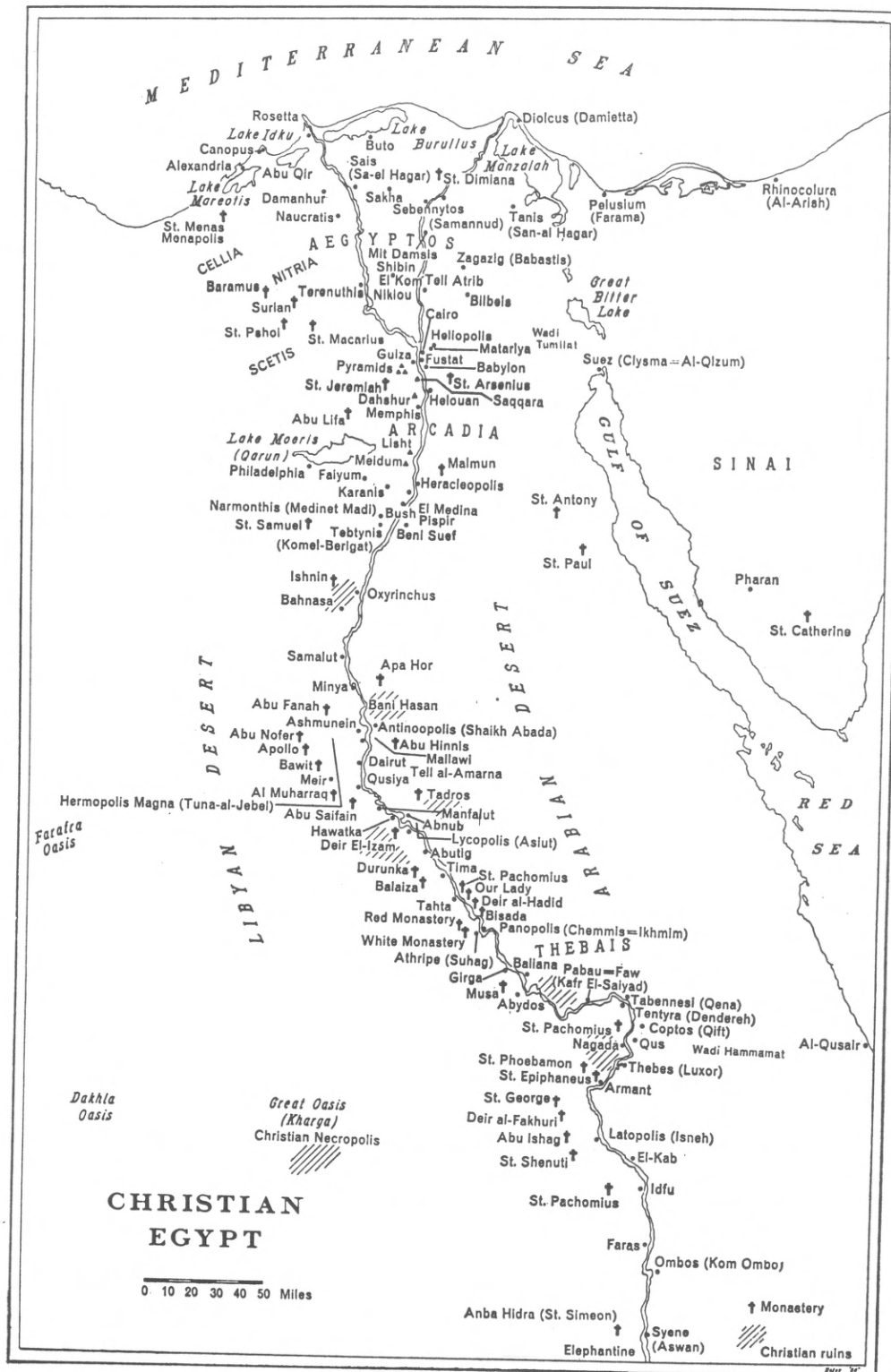
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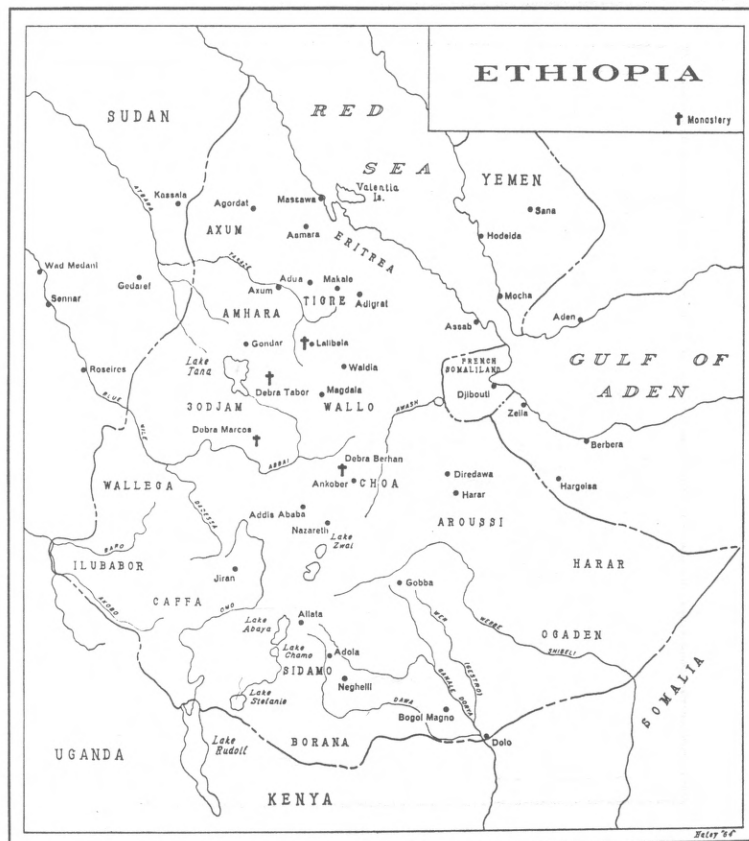
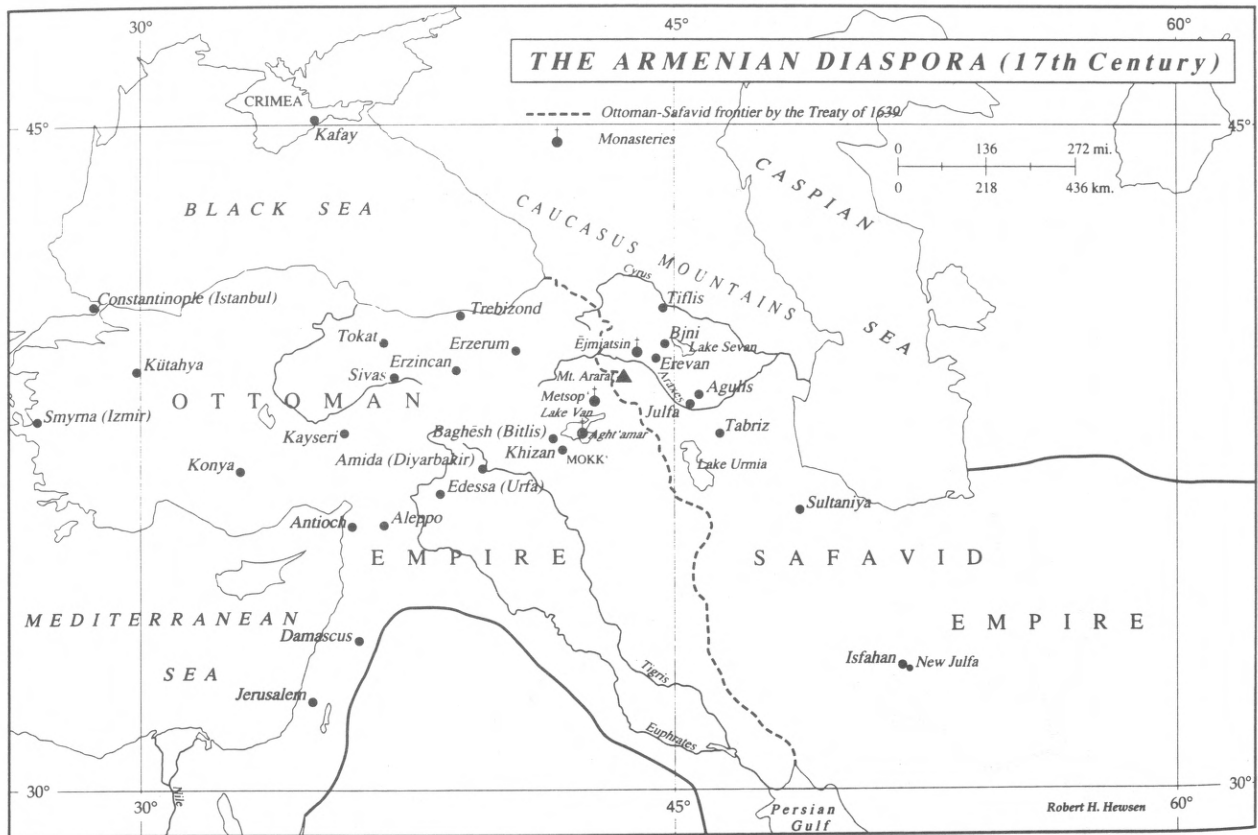


The Eastern Christian communities in history



The Coptic Orthodox Church in history

The Armenian Apostolic Church and Diaspora (17th c.)



The Ethiopian Orthodox Church in history

The Syrian Orthodox Church



The Oriental Orthodox Church in India (contemporary)

Part VII

Appendices

The Veneration of Icons in the Oriental Orthodox Churches

Christine Chaillot

The Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Geneva, September 23-28, 1990), wrote the following statement concerning the veneration of icons in the Oriental Orthodox Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopian, Armenian and Indian Churches:

"In relation to the teaching of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Orthodox Church [Nicea II, 787], the Oriental Orthodox agree that the theology and practice of the veneration of icons taught by that Council are in basic agreement with the teaching and practice of the Oriental Orthodox from ancient times, long before the convening of the Council, and that we have no disagreements in this regard."

In the Oriental Orthodox Churches, as in the Byzantine tradition, the main feasts are depicted in iconography, as well as the Mother of God and the Saints.

In each tradition the first and essential prototype of the icon of Christ is always the *mandylion*, and the image painted by St Luke for the representation of the Virgin. Coptic icons are of great interest for the history of iconography. Some icons from the 5th-7th centuries are among the oldest in the world. In Ethiopia the oldest icon still venerated is a 15th-century Virgin with Child which bears the following inscription: "This picture has been painted under our king Zara Yacob (1434-68) and our abbot Yeshaq (Isaac) of Daga. The Painter, Fere Seyon (Seed of Sion), is a poor man (i.e. a monk) of the monastery of Guben."

Through time and as a result of destruction, very ancient icons have rarely survived in the Ethiopian, Armenian and Syriac traditions. But ancient texts are a proof of their continuous existence from the first centuries until today and images in illuminated manuscripts can mirror each specific iconographic style. The Armenian writer John Sarkawag speaks of a miraculous icon of the Mother of God which could have been brought to the monastery of Hogeac' Vank' by the

Apostle Bartholomew, and which was highly venerated in the 12th century. Syrian authors, such as St Ephrem (d.373), John Chrysostom, Jacob of Sarug (d.521), John of Ephesus (d.586), Bar Hebraeus, Mar Moses bar Kepha (d.903), and Sabrishô bar Paulos (12th century), all mention iconography and the veneration of icons. Other texts from the Oriental Orthodox Churches give similar evidence, such as the Synaxaria, the Coptic History of the Patriarchs, the Chronicles of Michael the Syrian, and other theological writings of the Middle Ages. The Armenian Vrt'anes K'ert'ogh (late 6th to early 7th centuries) wrote the oldest known treatise against the iconoclasts.

How, when, and where do Oriental Orthodox venerate icons? In churches, during festival processions, and at home, the faithful light candles and oil lamps and pray, make prostrations in front of icons which they kiss or touch with their hands. Priests cense them during services, as an act of veneration. In Ethiopia Queen Walatta Giyorgis (18th century) ordered that an oil lamp should burn night and day in front of the icon of the Virgin. The Armenian Synod of Sis (1207) also recognised the veneration of icons. According to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Ignatius Zakka I, his Church has always venerated icons, in keeping with the doctrine of Nicea II.

What theological arguments do the Oriental Orthodox authors have concerning icons? Like St John of Damascus, they say that adoration is due to God alone and there is only veneration for icons. God can be represented as He became Incarnate of human flesh. This is repeated by the Armenians Vrt'anes K'ert'ogh ("We know the Invisible by the Visible"), John of Odsun (+ 728), and Nerses the Gracious (+ 1173). The Syrians, Dionysios bar Salibi (12th c.) and Jacob bar Shakko, insist that in front of icons only God is adored. The Doctrine of Addai (5th century) had already said that Christ, Son of God crucified, made Himself visible in His Humanity. The famous Coptic theologians of the Middle Ages, Severus ibn al-Muqaffa (10th c.), Abu l-Hair ibn

al-Tayyib (13th c.), Al-Mu'taman abu Ishaq ibn al-'Assal (13th c.), Yuhanna ibn Abi Zakariyya ibn Siba (14th c.) have written in Arabic about icons. The Coptic priest Abu l-Barakat (d.1324) wrote that by His Incarnation Christ obliges us to represent Him. Today Fr Tadros Malaty of Alexandria says that anyone despising the icon of the Lord despises His Incarnation. Pope Shenouda wrote that icons give a dogmatic teaching, since in front of each icon of Christ we remember His Humanity and His divinity, the two never being separated, and that an icon can affect the soul more than a book or a sermon.

Before being venerated icons are blessed using prayers specific to each Church, which give some interesting Christological arguments for a theology of metanoia and salvation. The Coptic and Ethiopian prayers offer similarities to the Byzantine ones.

Byzantine icons were commissioned or bought by all Oriental Orthodox. For example, the 14th-century icon of St Mark venerated until now in the Coptic "Hanging Church" in Old Cairo is signed by a Greek, Stephanos Therianos. Miraculous icons cure people, among them some are Byzantine.

Iconography has connections with Christology and we must keep in mind that the Oriental Orthodox Churches do represent the humanity of Christ on icons because they do not believe that His humanity was absorbed by His divinity. Oriental Orthodox venerate icons with Orthodox spirituality and faith.

The Coptic Orthodox Mission in Africa

Christine Chaillot

In 1946 a group of Kenyans who wanted to join the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria wrote to the Coptic Pope Youssab II (1946-59) requesting permission to do so. In 1948 some South Africans wrote with the same request Fr Isaac from the monastery of St Bishoy served the South African community alone until 1969.

Under Pope Cyril VI (1959-71) other Africans from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania contacted the Coptic Church. Cyril VI desired to invite young Africans to come and study in the Coptic Theological School and in the Institute of Coptic Studies, both situated in the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo.

In 1962 a Department for African Studies was created in the Institute of Coptic Studies. Its purpose was to prepare future Coptic missionaries. In 1966 sixteen Sudanese came to study at the Coptic Centre for Evangelisation in Cossika, Maadi (South of Cairo). Lessons were given in English and Arabic.

In 1963 the All African Conference of Churches, a pan-African ecumenical organisation, was inaugurated in Kampala and the Coptic Church became a member. In 1965 Father Yusuf Abdou Yusuf represented the Coptic Church in the first Christian Conference for Peace which was held in Freetown (Sierra Leone) and in the Conference of African Studies in Dar as-Salam, where the Coptic Church was considered a very African Church because of Her ancient apostolicity.

But it has been under Pope Shenouda III that the Coptic Mission has really organised itself. The interest of some Kenyans in establishing a link with the Coptic Church led to a bishop of African Affairs, bishop Antonios Marcos, being consecrated in June 1976 and then going to Nairobi to organise a Coptic mission. He had studied medicine and worked in Ethiopia before becoming a monk in the monastery of Baramous in Wadi Natroun in Egypt. In 1979 Pope Shenouda laid the foundation stone of the Church of the Monastery of St Antony in Nairobi. In 1983 a

Coptic Centre and the Church of St Mark were established in Nairobi, with different activities such as a sewing school for girls and carpentry workshops for boys, and theological classes for deacons, Sunday schools, translation of liturgical and other texts.

In 1988 a married priest, Fr Paul Foad Sidhom, was the first Copt ordained especially for mission. By 1989 the Coptic community in Kenya counted about 2500 members, including Kenyans, Egyptians working in Kenya, Ethiopians and Sudanese. Twelve churches had been established in different areas, 8000 indigenous people baptised, 4 Kenyan priests ordained, as well as many Kenyan deacons. Liturgies were sung in local languages: Swahili, Kikuyu, Kikamba, Luo, Kiluhya. The first "bush" church was made with branches by the people of Ukambani, 80 kilometres East of Nairobi. The faithful participated in financing the construction of their churches in Kinyui, Masselini, and in Katheka (East of Nairobi). In the Western Provinces Coptic monks and priests live in the Monastery of St Mena, near Maseno, where they serve the regional churches.

By 1991 a clinic in Nairobi offering the free distribution of medicine had been set up as well as a two month theological training course for deacons. Two kindergartens had been opened, one in Nairobi and the other in Ukambani. There are also Coptic communities in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and especially in South Africa. New communities seem to have been founded in West Africa.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the West Indies, USA and Africa

Christine Chaillot

In 1993 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church counted around 35 parishes in the West Indies, in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Bermuda, Guyana, St Kitts, St Thomas, and the Virgin Islands. At that time there were 25 priests and 40 deacons who served many thousands of people. A Bishop is responsible for the West Indies and Latin America. Who are these converts and how did this old African Church migrate to these islands situated between North and South America?

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has kept within her Christian Apostolic tradition an African cultural heritage since the first centuries of Christianity and this is meaningful not only for African people, but also for people of African descent looking for Christian roots. Most of the converts in the West Indies came from Rastafarian communities, a back-to-Africa movement which regards Ethiopia as its ancestral home.

Before spreading to other islands, the evangelisation by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church began in Trinidad and Tobago following a request made by Fr Garnet Springer from Trinidad to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church during his visit to Ethiopia. Subsequently an Ethiopian priest Fr Gabre Yesus Meshesha, who became bishop Athanasius in 1971, arrived in December 1952. In 1959 Abuna Theophilos, then assistant Patriarch of Ethiopia, visited and ordained two priests and six deacons and consecrated churches. As the Church grew it was served by Ethiopian priests as well as by native priests. The Ethiopian Church attracted followers in British Guyana and other islands.

In Jamaica, people such as Marcus Garvey, founder of the "Universal Negro Improvement Association", sought their African roots, as did a Rastafarian group who believed that the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I was the returned Messiah. The Emperor visited the islands of Trinidad and Jamaica in 1966. In 1970, Fr Laike M. Mandefro (later archbishop Yesehaq) came from New York to Jamaica and had difficulties with many of these Rastafarian candidates asking

for baptism in the name of Ras Tafari, that is of the Emperor. However, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church does not share this belief, and it was then her role to teach the true Orthodox Christian doctrine. In June 1973 Patriarch Abuna Theophilos visited Jamaica and celebrated the liturgy and thousands of converts received communion. His visit strengthened their faith.

After the establishment of the Ethiopian Church in Jamaica, requests came from Canada, Los Angeles, England and Bermuda (July 1975), where St George's church was obtained in 1984. On 27 January 1985, hundreds of people were baptised on St Thomas island. In February 1982 a Church was established on Saint Kitts.

Fr Aragawi Walda Gunru (today bishop Yohanes) was sent to London in 1975 and the Church St Mary of Sion, Clapham Common, was consecrated. This led to numerous baptisms of West Indians. Today there is another parish in Mayfair, London, England. In the USA the first churches were established in 1959 on the East Coast (New York), in 1973 and in 1983 on the West Coast (Los Angeles) and in 1972 in Canada. Two Bishops are responsible for the communities in North America. In Africa, churches were founded in Khartoum (Sudan) in 1940, in Djibouti in 1981, in Nairobi (Kenya) in 1986, in South Africa in 1990.

*Towards Unity: The Theological Dialogue between
the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches*

Towards Unity provides a selection of important statements and materials about the historic theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The intention of the book is to demonstrate the affirmation "that both families [of Orthodox Churches] have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith and the unbroken continuity of the apostolic tradition" (Second Agreed Statement, Chambésy 1990).

The publication includes the results of the non-official and official theological dialogues, and an introduction to the historical, liturgical, iconographic and contemporary missionary life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. It also contains selected liturgical and other texts which express the Christological faith of the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

It is aimed at all those interested in this dialogue, and primarily at members of the Orthodox Church who desire to learn more about their Oriental Orthodox sisters and brothers, in order to explain the steps towards the restoration of full communion between the two families of Churches. It provides the general reader and specialist alike with the essential documents and information for understanding this unprecedented development in the history of Christian Unity.

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